CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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BEYOND TARIFFS

India-Oman CEPA secures strategic Gulf Gateway

It gives Indian exporters wider access to gateway that sits outside Strait of Hormuz

DUBAI

The India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) came into force on Monday, opening duty-free access for most Indian exports to Oman and deepening economic ties between the two countries.

At first glance, the agreement is a trade pact focused on reducing tariffs and boosting commerce. Its strategic importance, though, has grown amid disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important shipping routes.

For India, the deal strengthens ties with a Gulf partner whose ports can remain accessible even when traffic through Hormuz is disrupted.

Why the deal matters

The India-Omani CEPA comes into force amid the ongoing US-Iran war, which has severely disrupted the movement of ships in the international waters crossing the Strait of Hormuz.

The strategically important narrow waterway handles about one-fifth (roughly 20%) of global daily oil consumption and 25 per cent of global seaborne oil trade, making it the world's most critical energy chokepoint.

Oman's advantage

The importance of the deal lies in Oman's location. Iran's chokehold on Hormuz has disrupted the flow of oil and gas to India from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), leading to a surge in crude oil prices. But, unlike most Gulf countries, which rely on shipping through the Hormuz, much of Oman's coastline is located outside the Strait, directly on the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman.

Major ports such as Salalah and Duqm remain accessible even when shipping traffic through the Strait faces disruption. This allows Oman to continue functioning as a trade and energy gateway during periods of regional instability.

MORE THAN TRADE

Trade agreements are often assessed by the tariffs they remove and the exports they generate. The India-Oman CEPA arrives with another dimension. As businesses and governments reassess supply chains exposed to the Strait of Hormuz, the agreement strengthens India's commercial links with a Gulf country whose geographic position offers access to trade routes beyond the region's most critical maritime chokepoint.

India-Oman CEPA comes into force

Zero duty on **98.08%** of Oman's tariff lines

99.38% of Trade Value becomes **ZERO DUTY**

The recent trade data highlights that advantage. While India's trade with several Gulf economies weakened, imports from Oman surged 246.4 per cent from $430 million to nearly $1.5 billion in April 2026, driven by higher purchases of crude oil and urea. India's exports to Oman fell by only 10.3% during the same period.

What CEPA delivers

Under the agreement, Oman is granting duty-free access on 98.08 per cent of its tariff lines, covering 99.38% of India's exports to the country. Before the CEPA, only 15.3% of Indian exports enjoyed zero-duty access.

The benefits extend across labour-intensive sectors including textiles, leather, footwear, gems and jewellery, engineering products, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, furniture, plastics and agricultural goods.

Announcing the implementation of the agreement, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal described it as "a defining milestone" in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mission to create "global pathways to prosperity" for students, artisans, women, farmers, fishermen and MSMEs by opening new markets, boosting exports, attracting investments and accelerating job creation.

No import duties

Indian exports to Oman were valued at about $3.64 billion in fiscal 2026, led by refined petroleum products, calcined alumina, iron and steel products, machinery and rice. According to Goyal, the elimination of Omani import duties will make a wide range of Indian products more competitive in the market.

"Sectors dominated by small businesses such as iron and steel, textiles, leather, auto components and industrial equipment, could see large international orders after the agreement," he said.

He also pointed to potential employment gains from higher exports. "Increased textiles exports to Oman will boost production and create jobs across major clusters such as Tirupur, Surat, Ludhiana, Panipat, Coimbatore, Karur, Moradabad, Jaipur, and Ahmedabad. Artisans and weavers across India will also gain from higher international demand for their products," Goyal said.

INDIA-OMAN CEPA

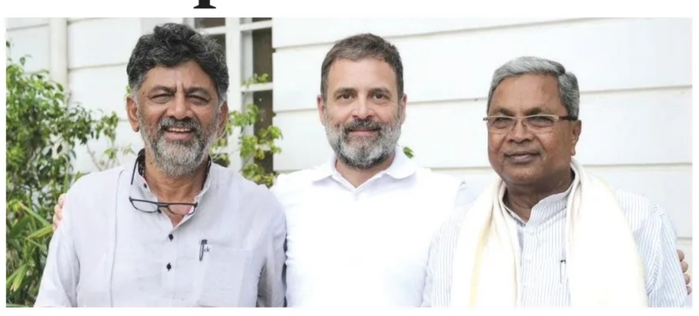
India becomes only the second nation after the US to secure a comprehensive bilateral trade pact with Oman.

What it offers?

- Zero-duty access for 99.38% of India's exports to Oman.
- To significantly boost bilateral trade, exports, employment generation and strategic economic integration.
- Breakthrough trade facilitation measures remove non-tariff barriers and fast-track market access for Indian products; EIC certificates to be accepted at Omani ports.
- To strengthens India's dominance in fisheries, meat, eggs, marine products, processed foods with duty elimination.
- Gateway to GCC and East Africa: Oman's logistics hubs at Sohar, Duqm and Salalah to amplify India's regional trade connectivity.
- Best-ever services offer by Oman covering 127 service sub-sectors, unlocking opportunities for Indian professionals, startups and knowledge-led enterprises.
- Creates a strategic economic corridor connecting South Asia, the Gulf and East Africa.

Power shift: All eyes on DKS-Siddu top brass meet

Delhi talks are also anticipated to address the question of who will succeed CM-designate as KPCC chief.



NEW DELHI

Chief Minister-designate D K Shivakumar and senior leader Siddaramaiah arrived in New Delhi to hold discussions with the Congress high command over the composition of the new Karnataka cabinet on Monday.

Shivakumar replaces Siddaramaiah after being formally elected leader of the Congress Legislature Party in Karnataka on Saturday. He is scheduled to be sworn in as the chief minister on June 3, alongside select members of his council at 4:05 PM on Wednesday.

Shivakumar, who checked into Karnataka Bhawan in Delhi, told reporters, "We have to decide," a referencing to the council of ministers.

Earlier on Sunday, on the number of ministers to be sworn in alongside him, he said "I don't know. Whatever the party high command decides will be done. I don't want to comment on that."

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge maintained that no formal announcement or proposal on the ministry's composition has been received yet. Siddaramaiah's son and Congress MLC Yathindra, after meeting Shivakumar, expressed confidence about a cabinet berth, saying the party high command assured him of a ministerial position.

Cong mulls setting up coordination penel in a bid to decentralise 'control'

Congress is mulling setting up coordination committees in states where the party is in power to ensure that control of the administration is not centralised in one person and there is proper consultation within the party on policy formation and governance. The template is that of the UPA Coordination Committee but this will be an inner-party mechanism to ensure that governance is on track and the party leadership and the government are on the same page. Congress is in power in Karnataka, Telangana, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh. The Chief Minister and senior leaders as also a Congress in-charge are likely to be part of the new mechanism, which has the endorsement of LoP Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, who is of the view that a broad-based mechanism is needed instead of focussing one leader centric governance.

The Delhi talks are also anticipated to address the question of who succeeds the CM-designate as Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee President.

Senior MLA Satish Jarkiholi is expected to be a frontrunner for the position, though he is reportedly seeking a cabinet position along with the organisational post.

With Karnataka's council of ministers capped at 34, with the inclusion of the chief minister, and a swelling pool of aspirants competing for limited berths, Shivakumar faces one of his first and most consequential challenges as CM-designate. Aspirants have reached the national capital in numbers, with former legislators and ministers seeking audiences with both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar to assert their claims.

Speculation is rife that that several ministers from the outgoing Siddaramaiah cabinet may not be retained and that the new government could have numerous deputy CMs. The Congress leadership is additionally expected to finalise candidates for the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Council elections scheduled for June 18.

Zameer funded SDPI candidate's campaign? Bombshell audio goes viral

BENGALURU

A fresh controversy rocked Karnataka Congress after an audio clip surfaced on social media purportedly showing B Z Zameer Ahmed Khan, the Housing, Wakf, and Minority Welfare Minister in the recently-dissolved Siddaramaiah-government, backing a rival candidate against the party's nominee in the Davanagere South Assembly bypoll, exposing the deep faultlines in the state Congress.

The audio, allegedly of a phone conversation between Zameer and Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation (KMDC) director Mohammed Siraj on polling day, appears to show the two discussing efforts to secure votes for the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) candidate rather than the Congress contender.

The April 9 bypoll was triggered by the death of senior Congress leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa and the Congress fielded his grandson, Samarth Shamanur Mallikarjuna, while the BJP nominated Srinivas T Dasakariyappa. The SDPI's candidate was Afsar Kodlipete.

The constituency has a sizeable Muslim voters and the bypoll was marred by allegations that a sections of Congress leaders were unhappy with the party's decision not to field a Muslim candidate.

Zameer, along with Congress MLCs Naseer Ahmed and Abdul Jabbar, had faced accusations during the campaign of covertly supporting the SDPI candidate and allegedly helping fund his campaign.

Though the leaders denied wrongdoing at the time, the leaked audio clip paints an entirely different picture. In it, Zameer allegedly tells Siraj that the outcome of the bypoll is a "question of my reputation" and says he has been suffering "sleepless nights" over the contest.

When Zameer asks how polling is progressing, Siraj succinctly says "Cooker. Only cooker", a reference to the SDPI candidate's poll symbol. "We have only asked vote for cooker, vote only for cooker," Siraj is heard saying.

Zameer terms it 'fake'

Senior Congress leader Zameer Ahmed Khan on Monday termed it "fake" and claimed it was part of a "political conspiracy" generated using AI technology. Khan said a complaint would be filed with the cyber police against those responsible for creating and circulating the audio clip, and legal action would be initiated against them.

Annamalai on BJP exit mode?

CHENNAI

Former Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai claims there is no opportunity or future for him in the party and is likely to quit after a meeting with party chief Nitin Nabin later today, as per sources.

The development comes nearly a month after the Tamil Nadu polls, where the BJP won just one seat in the 234-member House.

"Please wait. We will sit down and talk in two days," Annamalai told a posse of reporters as he arrived at Chennai airport to catch a flight to Delhi.

Curiously, the vehicle in which he arrived at the airport did not display a BJP flag.

As per sources, the 41-year-old IPS officer-turned-politician was offered a Rajya Sabha seat, but he refused the offer. Sources say he is likely to launch a movement first and a party later.

With 5 new judges, SC nears full strength

NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday appointed five new judges to the Supreme Court, taking the apex court's working strength to 37 and leaving just one vacancy after the recent expansion of its sanctioned strength.

In separate notifications issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Centre cleared the appointments of Senior Advocate Venkita Subramani Mohana, Justice Chandrashekhar, Chief Justice of Bombay HC, Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana HCs, Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva, Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh HC, and Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court.

'NO MORE INJUSTICE'

Will ensure Gujarat doesn't take our match again: DKS

BENGALURU

Karnataka chief minister-designate D K Shivakumar on Monday stressed on the fact that the IPL 2026 final, which Royal Challengers Bengaluru won at Ahemdabad on Sunday, was supposed to be held in Bengaluru, adding that such a shift would not happen again.

He indirectly accused higher authorities, referring to them as "Gujarat people" of using influence and taking the big match away from the southern city. "The IPL final was supposed to be held in Bengaluru. We had given permission for it. But the Gujarat people used their influence and took the match away from us. We are making the necessary preparations to ensure this doesn't happen again — it will take some time."

He said that sports fans in Karnataka were wronged, adding that the team had made everyone proud. "Our sports fans may have been wronged. The team representing our state played well and won. They have made all of us proud. On behalf of the people of Karnataka, I congratulate them."

Moments after RCB's victory on Sunday,Shivakumar lashed out at IPL organisers for shifting the venue of the final to Gujarat, saying it was an injustice to Karnataka, and alleged the move was politically motivated.

The IPL final was supposed to be held in Bengaluru. We had given permission for it. But the Gujarat people used their influence and took the match away from us. We are making the necessary preparations to ensure this doesn't happen again.

—DK Shivakumar, Karnataka CM-designate

"The IPL final match should have happened in Bengaluru. Injustice has been done to us. Due to politics, they held it at a different venue. I won't speak much on it," he said.

According to a BCCI announcement, the final was shifted out of Bengaluru after the after the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) allegedly sought thousands of complimentary tickets beyond the permitted quota.

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia had said the decision to move key knockout matches away from Bengaluru was linked to KSCA's reported demand for an additional 10,000 tickets during league-stage matches.

Under IPL rules, host state associations are entitled to complimentary tickets amounting to 15% of a stadium's seating capacity.

CJP founder to return to Delhi on Jun 6, protest against Pradhan

NEW DELHI

Abhijeet Dipke, the founder of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), on Monday announced he will return to India on June 6 to launch a peaceful protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak controversy.

The announcement came weeks after Dipke, a Boston-based strategist, launched the CJP, a satirical political movement, in the aftermath of remarks made by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant during hearings related to examination irregularities, when he used the term "cockroaches", while referring to students and activists. Although the CJI later clarified that his remarks were not directed at students and had been misunderstood, it sparked a huge debate online. Dipke subsequently launched the CJP, turning the 'cockroach' term into a campaign for accountability in the education system.

In an X video, he said he had decided to return to India to intensify the campaign against Pradhan, arguing that the NEET paper leak and subsequent disruption had affected millions of students.

QUICK READ

Religious leaders invited for DKS' swearing-in ceremony

BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has invited religious leaders from various faiths to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Chief Minister-designate D.K. Shivakumar, scheduled to be held at Lok Bhavan on Wednesday. Shivakumar, who was elected leader of the Congress Legislature Party following Siddaramaiah's resignation, has chosen to take oath in the presence of representatives from different religions as a symbol of unity and harmony. According to official instructions, around 55 religious leaders, including Hindu seers, Christian Fathers and Muslim Maulvis, have been invited to the ceremony. The event is expected to witness the presence of political leaders, dignitaries and representatives from diverse communities across Karnataka.

Dalit groups demand Deputy CM post for community leader

BENGALURU

A coalition of Dalit organisations staged a protest at Freedom Park on Monday, demanding that a Dalit leader be appointed as Karnataka's Deputy Chief Minister in the new government led by Chief Minister-designate D.K. Shivakumar. The protesters urged the Congress leadership to consider senior Dalit leaders such as G Parameshwara, Satish Jarkiholi, H C Mahadevappa or K H Muniyappa for the post. With Shivakumar set to take oath at Lok Bhavan on June 3, the demonstrators appealed to Congress leaders K C Venugopal and Randeep Singh Surjewala to ensure that a Dalit leader is sworn in as Deputy Chief Minister on the same day.

Police seize drugs worth ₹200 crore in anti-narcotics crackdown

BENGALURU

Bengaluru Police have intensified their fight against narcotics, seizing natural and synthetic drugs worth more than ₹200 crore during the first five months of 2026. The CCB's Narcotics Control Unit and local police have conducted sustained operations against drug networks, leading to a sharp rise in arrests and seizures. Despite the crackdown, officials say the growing supply of drugs into the city remains a major challenge. Police registered 1,972 drug-related cases till May this year, compared to 1,402 in 2025 and 530 in 2024. A total of 2,601 Indians and 32 foreign nationals have been arrested, while around 1,122 kg of narcotics were seized. In the last 15 days alone, drugs worth ₹65 crore were confiscated.

Apartment owners pin hopes on DKS for long-awaited housing reforms

Residents seek clarity, legal certainty and passage of new apartment law.

CH NEWS,BENGALURU

With D.K. Shivakumar set to assume office as Karnataka's next Chief Minister, apartment owners and resident welfare associations across the state are hoping that a long-pending overhaul of apartment governance laws will finally become a reality.

Homebuyers have renewed their demand for the enactment of the Karnataka Apartment (Ownership and Management) Bill, 2025, which is intended to replace the confusion created by the existence of two separate laws governing apartment communities — the Karnataka Apartment Ownership Act, 1972, and the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960.

The issue has remained unresolved despite repeated discussions between the government and resident welfare associations over the past three years. Shivakumar had first raised the prospect of a comprehensive apartment law during a Brand Bengaluru meeting with resident groups in 2023. Since then, apartment associations have actively campaigned for reforms, while courts and the Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) have delivered several rulings highlighting legal ambiguities.

During a meeting with resident welfare associations at Vidhana Soudha in December 2025, Shivakumar acknowledged many of the concerns raised by apartment owners and assured them that the government would work towards a solution.

Now, with the Congress leader expected to take charge of the state government, apartment residents believe the proposed legislation could finally be tabled and passed in the upcoming legislature session.

According to housing activists, the coexistence of two different legal frameworks has led to uncertainty regarding association registration, ownership rights, maintenance responsibilities and the transfer of common areas from builders to residents.

Satish Mallya, president of the Bangalore Apartments' Federation, described the Karnataka Apartment (Ownership and Management) Bill, 2025, as one of the most significant pieces of legislation for apartment communities in the state.

"The proposed law has remained pending despite repeated assurances. Apartment residents hope the new leadership will prioritise the legislation and address the concerns of lakhs of homeowners across Karnataka," he said.

Anil Kalgi, president of the Bangalore City Flat Owners' Welfare Association, said no substantial progress had been made since discussions held in December.

"The issue has been pending since the end of 2023. We expect the new government to resolve it at the earliest," he said.

Residents have also expressed concern over conflicting court orders and regulatory interpretations. They have urged the government to ensure that ownership titles and interests in housing projects are transferred directly to apartment associations, providing legal certainty and stronger protection for homebuyers across the state.

Bengaluru records highest suicide rate among metros: NCRB

CH NEWS,BENGALURU

Bengaluru has recorded the highest suicide rate among India's metropolitan cities despite ranking second in the total number of suicide cases, according to the latest data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2024.

The city reported 2,403 suicides during the year. With an estimated population of 84.99 lakh, Bengaluru's suicide rate stood at 28.3 per lakh population, the highest among all major metros in the country.

In comparison, Delhi recorded 2,905 suicides — the highest absolute number among metropolitan cities — but with a much larger population of 163.15 lakh, its suicide rate was significantly lower at 17.8. The figures indicate that Bengaluru faces a greater per-capita burden despite having fewer total cases.

Residents, experts brainstorm solutions for Malleswaram civic challenges

CH NEWS,BENGALURU

More than 40 residents of Malleswaram Ward 53 joined urban planners, mobility experts and civic practitioners for a community workshop aimed at finding solutions to long-standing civic issues in the neighbourhood.

Titled 'Walkable Malleswaram: Reimagining Ward 53', the workshop focused on improving walkability, parking management, street vending and waste management. The event was convened by Preeti Sunderajan and facilitated by Greenpeace India's Bengaluru Rising campaign.

Participants engaged in mapping exercises and group discussions to identify local challenges and propose practical improvements to public spaces and civic infrastructure.

"Ward-level solutions are often designed from the top down, with citizens being informed after decisions have already been made. This workshop turned that model around," Sunderajan said.

The discussions were guided by experts including Prof. Ashish Verma of the IISc Sustainable Transportation Lab, along with representatives from Street Matrix Bengaluru and the Oorvani Foundation.

Prof. Verma emphasised the need for collaboration between citizens, researchers, government agencies and civil society organisations to translate ideas on sustainable mobility into effective on-ground solutions.He noted that IISc is currently working on issues related to walkability and safety around schools in Malleswaram, many of which face challenges due to inadequate parking facilities and increasing traffic congestion.

Deepak Srinivasan of Greenpeace India's Bengaluru Rising campaign highlighted the importance of community participation in urban planning.

Veterinary College land cannot be diverted, students oppose acquisition

Students and alumni oppose government move, citing education, research and biosecurity concerns.

CH NEWS,BENGALURU

Students and alumni of the Veterinary College in Hebbal have strongly opposed the Karnataka government's proposal to allocate a portion of the institution's land for other public projects, declaring that they will not allow the campus to be used for any purpose unrelated to veterinary education, research and animal healthcare.

The government has reportedly issued a notification proposing the allocation of four acres of land from the college campus for the construction of residential quarters for judges and an additional three acres for a hospital. The move has triggered protests from students, former students and members of the veterinary community.

The college, functioning under the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University, is regarded as one of the state's premier institutions for veterinary education and research. It has earned recognition for its contributions to animal healthcare and is ranked among the leading veterinary institutions in the country.

According to students, a similar proposal was made in 2011 when the government sought 20 acres of land for housing High Court judges. The college administration at the time opposed the request, following which a Judicial Village was developed on nearby land acquired by Karnataka Agro Industries.

Students claim the latest proposal emerged after authorities sought additional land adjacent to the existing Judicial Village to expand residential facilities for judges. They also allege that demands from local political leaders for a human hospital in the area led to the inclusion of three acres for healthcare infrastructure in the notification.

Protesters argue that diverting college land would adversely affect academic and research activities while creating serious biosecurity concerns. The campus houses cattle, pig and poultry farms as well as laboratories engaged in veterinary research and vaccine production.

The Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals located on the campus handles infectious viral and bacterial pathogens and manufactures vaccines for various animals. Experts associated with the institution have warned that increased public movement around such facilities could compromise biosecurity protocols and pose potential health risks.

More than 500 students study at the college, many of whom have joined demonstrations against the proposal.

"We will not allow our institution's land to be used for any other purpose under any circumstances," protesting students said.

Student representative Karthik Naroni suggested that if land is required for judges' residences, alternative locations such as Arkavathi Layout or Shivarama Karanth Layout should be considered instead of reducing the college's campus area.

Yathindra hopeful of cabinet berth, says Rahul assured support

CH NEWS,BENGALURU

Amid intense discussions over the formation of Karnataka's new cabinet under Chief Minister-designate D.K. Shivakumar, Congress leader Yathindra Siddaramaiah has expressed confidence about securing a place in the ministry, saying senior party leader Rahul Gandhi had assured that his interests would be taken care of.

Yathindra, son of outgoing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, said he is hopeful of being inducted into the cabinet and is not particular about any specific portfolio. He also dismissed speculation about his interest in the Deputy Chief Minister's post.

"During my last meeting with the high command, Rahul Gandhi told me that my interests would be taken care of and that I would be inducted into the cabinet. I am hopeful. Whatever portfolio is assigned, I will be happy," Yathindra said.

His remarks come at a crucial time as the Congress leadership finalises the structure of the new government following Shivakumar's election as leader of the Congress Legislature Party after Siddaramaiah's resignation.

Sources indicated that discussions are also underway on the possibility of appointing Deputy Chief Ministers and ensuring regional, social and caste representation in the new ministry. Siddaramaiah has reportedly proposed the formation of a coordination committee to facilitate smooth functioning within the government and the party.

Congress leaders said the final decisions on ministerial appointments and the size of the cabinet will be taken by the party high command.

Meanwhile, Rajya Sabha MP Syed Naseer Hussain said the transition of power in Karnataka had been smooth and that the new Council of Ministers would be sworn in alongside Shivakumar. He added that the leadership would carefully consider caste, community, social and regional balance while constituting the cabinet.The swearing-in ceremony is scheduled to take place on June 3, marking the beginning of a new phase in Karnataka politics under Shivakumar's leadership.

'1Km Challenge' triggers criticism over Bengaluru's poor footpaths

CH NEWS,BENGALURU

The Greater Bengaluru Authority's (GBA) latest campaign encouraging residents to walk short distances instead of taking autorickshaws has sparked widespread criticism online, with many citizens highlighting the poor state of pedestrian infrastructure across the city.

The civic body recently launched the #1KmChallenge on social media platform X, urging people to walk for trips shorter than one kilometre. The initiative is aimed at reducing traffic congestion, lowering carbon emissions and promoting healthier lifestyles. The campaign also used hashtags such as #WalkForClimate, #ClimateActionStartsWithYou and #GreenBengaluru, while tagging Chief Minister-designate D K Shivakumar.

Eight mobile phones stolen from PG as thieves strike at night

CH NEWS,BENGALURU

A group of paying guest (PG) residents in southeast Bengaluru woke up to a costly surprise after thieves allegedly entered their accommodation during the night and stole eight mobile phones.

According to a complaint filed by 27-year-old cab driver Darshan, the theft occurred at Sai Aradhya Luxury PG for Gents on Kudlu Main Road in Hosapalya. Darshan returned to the PG and left his two mobile phones charging before going to sleep. Several other residents had also kept their phones on charge inside their rooms.

When Darshan woke up the next morning, he discovered that both his phones were missing. A check with other inmates revealed that six more phones had also been stolen from different rooms in the building.

Following the complaint, Bandepalya police registered a case under Section 305 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which deals with theft in a dwelling house and other specified premises.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the PG did not have a security guard on duty at the time of the incident. Police examined CCTV footage from the premises and reportedly found evidence of two unidentified men entering the building during the night and leaving after committing the theft.Investigators suspect the thieves took advantage of lax security measures and unlocked room doors to carry out the crime without alerting the residents.Police have launched a search for the suspects and are analysing CCTV footage from nearby areas to trace their movements. Authorities have also advised PG residents and hostel inmates to lock their rooms and secure valuable belongings, especially during the night.

ALARMING SITUATION

Karnataka sees slight rise in infant mortality, birth rate stays low

CH NEWS,BENGALURU

Karnataka recorded a marginal increase in its Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) after more than a decade of steady improvement, according to the latest Sample Registration System (SRS) report released by the Registrar General of India. However, health officials maintain that the increase does not signal a reversal of the state's long-term progress in child health indicators.

IMR, which measures the number of deaths of children under one year of age per 1,000 live births, rose from 14 in 2023 to 15 in 2024. Despite the increase, Karnataka remains significantly better than the national average IMR of 24 and continues to rank among the country's better-performing states.

Between 2013 and 2023, Karnataka achieved a 55 per cent reduction in infant mortality, reflecting sustained improvements in healthcare access, maternal care and child health programmes.

Dr. Basavaraj B. Dhabadi, Deputy Director (Child Health), said minor fluctuations are expected as mortality rates approach very low levels.

"When the standard of care improves and mortality rates start nearing single digits, such variations are expected. They should not be interpreted as a change in the overall declining trend," he said.

Officials added that while the exact reason for the increase is difficult to identify, the state will continue implementing district-specific child health strategies and awareness programmes.

The report also highlights a continuing rural-urban gap in infant mortality. Urban Karnataka recorded an IMR of 11 in 2024, while rural areas reported a significantly higher figure of 17, indicating the need for targeted interventions outside major cities.

At the same time, Karnataka's birth rate remained below the national average for the third consecutive year, underscoring the state's gradual transition towards a low-growth demographic profile.

The state's birth rate stood at 15.2 in 2024, compared to the national average of 18.3. The decline has been particularly noticeable in urban areas, where the birth rate fell from 14.5 in 2022 to 13.7 in 2024. Rural areas also witnessed a decline from 16.8 to 15.9 during the same period.

Health experts attribute the trend to changing lifestyles, delayed marriages, higher educational attainment and a growing preference for smaller families, especially among urban populations.

QUICK READ

260 drunk-driving cases booked during RCB victory celebrations

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Bengaluru Traffic Police registered 260 drunk-driving cases in a single night as fans celebrated Royal Challengers Bengaluru's (RCB) second consecutive IPL title victory. The city witnessed widespread celebrations after RCB defeated Gujarat Titans in the IPL 2026 final. Fans gathered across several localities, organised bike rallies, burst firecrackers and raised slogans in support of the franchise. Traffic police intensified enforcement during the celebrations and conducted special checks across the city, leading to the booking of 260 motorists for driving under the influence of alcohol.

International photo, video expo to begin in Bengaluru on June 12

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
The Karnataka Video and Photo Association will organise a three-day international photo and video exhibition-cum-sale at Tripura Vasini, Palace Grounds, from June 12. Association president H.V. Krishnappa and secretary A. Jagadish said more than 150 national and international companies from the photography industry will participate in the event. Products including cameras, albums, software, printer frames and lamination equipment will be showcased. Over 5,000 photography-related products and equipment will be displayed and offered for sale. The exhibition will also feature free camera servicing, workshops, eye-screening camps, modelling photography sessions and a fashion show for visitors.

Bengaluru-Mangaluru Vande Bharat trial run cancelled, project faces delay

The trial attracted attention as it aimed to test performance through Shiradi Ghat

BENGALURU

The much-awaited trial run of the proposed Bengaluru-Mangaluru Vande Bharat Express, scheduled for June 3, has been cancelled, disappointing railway enthusiasts and commuters who have been eagerly awaiting faster rail connectivity between Karnataka's capital and the coastal city.

South Western Railway has officially withdrawn the planned test operation through a communication issued by the Office of the Chief Passenger Transportation Manager (CPTM). The order confirms that the scheduled trial run between Yeshwantpur and Mangaluru will not take place as planned, and all operational arrangements made across railway divisions and stations have been cancelled.

According to railway sources, the proposed exercise involved an eight-coach Vande Bharat train operating from Yeshwantpur to Mangaluru and returning on the same day. The trial was intended to assess the train's performance, track conditions, operational feasibility and overall efficiency along the route before the service is formally introduced. The planned run had generated significant interest across Karnataka, particularly because it was expected to evaluate the train's capability through the challenging Shiradi Ghat section. The ghat stretch is considered one of the most demanding railway corridors in the state and serves as a vital link between Bengaluru and coastal Karnataka.

Railway officials have not provided a formal explanation for the cancellation. However, sources within the railway system indicated that factors such as rake availability, operational priorities and technical preparedness may have contributed to the decision.

Notably, regular freight services continue to operate through the Shiradi Ghat section without disruption, suggesting that the postponement is unlikely to be linked to track safety or infrastructure concerns. Railway observers believe the delay is more likely due to logistical and operational considerations.

The Bengaluru-Mangaluru Vande Bharat service is expected to be a major boost for passengers travelling between the two cities. The train is projected to reduce travel time considerably while improving connectivity for business travellers, students, tourists and residents of coastal Karnataka.

The proposed service is also expected to strengthen economic ties between Bengaluru and Dakshina Kannada by providing a faster and more comfortable mode of transport.

For now, however, the project remains in a holding pattern. Railway authorities are yet to announce a revised date for the trial run, leaving passengers and rail enthusiasts awaiting further clarity on when the next phase of testing will begin.

Caste abuse case: Special court acquits MLA Munirathna

BENGALURU

The Special Court for People's Representatives in Bengaluru has acquitted BJP MLA Munirathna in a case registered under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, holding that the prosecution failed to establish the essential ingredients required to prove the offence.

The order was passed by a bench headed by Judge Santosh Gajanana Bhat while hearing a petition filed by Munirathna seeking discharge from charges arising out of a complaint lodged in connection with an alleged incident in 2024.According to the case records, the alleged incident took place on May 18, 2024, during a meeting of contractors held at the MLA's residence. The complainant had alleged that caste-based abusive remarks were made during the gathering and claimed that the conversation had been recorded on an Apple Watch. However, the complaint was filed only on September 13, 2024, several months after the alleged incident came to light.

While delivering the verdict, the court observed that for an offence to be established under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, the alleged caste abuse must occur in a place within public view and the person who is allegedly insulted must be present at the time of the incident. The court noted that the alleged occurrence took place at a private residence and not in a public place. It further pointed out that complainant Velu Naiker was not present when the alleged remarks were made and came to know about them only several months later. Referring to various Supreme Court judgments, the bench stated that both the requirements of public view and direct presence of the aggrieved person were absent in the present case. As a result, the court held that the prosecution had failed to prove the allegations beyond reasonable doubt. The court also found insufficient material to sustain charges under Sections 504 and 506 of the Indian Penal Code relating to intentional insult and criminal intimidation.

Sportsmanship key to student development: Chandrakumar

BENGALURU

Students should strive to develop sportsmanship alongside academic excellence, said Chandrakumar, Joint Secretary of the Karnataka Amateur Boxing Association, while addressing the prize distribution ceremony of the 20th Sports Festival 2025-26 at Seshadripuram Academy of Business Studies College in Kengeri.

He emphasised that participation in sports and cultural activities plays a vital role in maintaining physical fitness and building discipline, teamwork and character among students. According to him, extracurricular activities help shape well-rounded individuals and contribute significantly to personal growth.

College Principal Dr Jayaram said sports are as important as academics in a student's life. He noted that sporting events provide opportunities for talented students to showcase their abilities and gain recognition at state, national and international levels.

During the programme, medals and certificates were distributed to more than 600 students who excelled in academics, sports, cultural activities and various extracurricular competitions conducted during the academic year.

Dr Jayaram reiterated that educational institutions must encourage students to actively participate in sports, as such activities help develop confidence, leadership qualities and a competitive spirit.

Several dignitaries attended the event, including international volleyball player and MVP awardee P. Karthik, Kannada light music and folk singer V. Rajesh Anekal, Physical Education Director C. Suresh, Dr U. Roopashree, Dr R. Manjunath and Dr M.C. Shobha. Faculty members, staff and students of the college were also present. The annual sports festival concluded with the distribution of awards and recognition of student achievements across multiple fields.

Bengaluru leads India's office market boom on GCC, tech demand

BENGALURU

Bengaluru has strengthened its position as India's leading office real estate destination, emerging as the biggest contributor to the country's office space demand during the first quarter of 2026.

According to industry estimates, India's office market recorded a net absorption of 13.5 million sq. ft between January and March 2026. Of this, Bengaluru alone accounted for 4.9 million sq. ft, representing nearly 36 percent of the national total and marking a 52 percent increase over the corresponding period last year.

The growth has been driven primarily by Global Capability Centres (GCCs), multinational corporations and technology firms, which continue to expand operations in the city despite global economic uncertainties. Demand for premium Grade A office spaces remains strong as companies prioritise quality infrastructure, connecti vity and access to skilled talent.

Real estate experts note that leasing activity is increasingly concentrated in established commercial corridors and rapidly developing growth zones. Areas with metro connectivity and large integrated business parks are witnessing the highest levels of demand.

City accounts for 36 percent of India's office absorption in Q1 2026, with Whitefield, Sarjapur, Hebbal and other corridors driving leasing and investment growth.

Whitefield continues to be one of the city's most active office markets. Rentals in the area range between Rs 45 and Rs 80 per sq. ft per month, while property values have increased significantly over the past five years. The operational Purple Line Metro has further strengthened the area's appeal among GCCs, multinational firms and engineering centres.

Sarjapur Road has also emerged as a major commercial hotspot. Its strategic location linking Whitefield, Outer Ring Road and Electronic City has made it attractive for IT companies and startups. Office rentals in premium developments are touching around Rs 100 per sq. ft per month, while infrastructure projects such as future metro connectivity and the Peripheral Ring Road are expected to support further growth.

Electronic City remains a preferred destination for large technology campuses due to its relatively lower occupancy costs. Rentals range between Rs 55 and Rs 70 per sq. ft per month, and upcoming connectivity improvements, including the Yellow Line Metro, are expected to enhance its attractiveness further.

Industry observers also point to growing interest in emerging business districts such as Hebbal, North Bengaluru, Devanahalli and Kengeri, where infrastructure investments are creating new opportunities for commercial development.

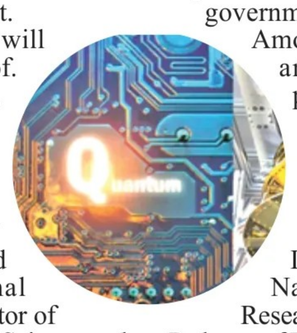
With strong demand from global firms, expanding infrastructure and a steady pipeline of Grade A office projects, Bengaluru continues to reinforce its status as the country's foremost commercial real estate hub and a key driver of India's office market growth.

Karnataka forms Quantum Task Force to drive innovation and research

BENGALURU

In a major push to position Karnataka as the country's leading destination for quantum technology and innovation, the state government has constituted the Karnataka Quantum Task Force, a high-level committee that will guide policy, research, infrastructure development and industry adoption in the emerging field.

The Department of Electronics, Information Technology, Biotechnology, and Science & Technology has issued an official order establishing the task force. The committee will oversee the implementation of the Karnataka Quantum Roadmap, unveiled during the recently held Quantum India Bengaluru Summit.



The task force will be chaired by Prof. Arindam Ghosh, JRD Tata Chair Professor in the Department of Physics at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and JC Bose National Fellow. The Director of the Department of Science and Technology and the Managing Director of Karnataka Science and Technology Promotion Society (KSTEPS) will serve as member secretaries. The 16-member body comprises representatives from leading academic institutions, research organisations, industry, and government departments.

Among the academic and research experts included are Prof. Urbasi Sinha of the Raman Research Institute, Prof. B. Gurumurthy of IISc, Prof. Akshay Nayak of Quantum Research Park, Dr. Ajit Padyana of VTU-VRIF Centre for Deep Technologies, Prof. Rajesh Gopakumar of ICTS, and Dr. Taslimarif Syed of C-CAMP. Industry representation includes L. Venkata Subramanian, CEO of Qubit Force and former head of IBM Quantum India, Dr. Nagendra Nagaraj of QPiAI, Naganand Doreswamy of IdeaSpring, Wing Comman der S. Sudhakaran (Retd.) of QuGates Technologies, and Seema Ambastha of L&T Data Center and Cloud Services.

Senior government officials from the Commerce and Industries Department, Higher Education Department, and IT-BT and Science & Technology Department are also part of the panel.The task force has been entrusted with providing strategic direction for quantum computing, quantum communication, research collaboration, startup promotion and industrial adoption. It will also help frame policies aimed at strengthening Karnataka.

BESCOM providing customer-friendly services under one roof: ST Somashekar

BENGALURU

Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) is functioning in a customer-friendly manner by delivering a range of electricity-related services under one roof for the convenience of the public, Yeshwantpur MLA S.T. Somashekar said on Monday.

He was speaking after inaugurating the newly constructed BESCOM K-4 Subdivision office building at Sir M. Visvesvaraya Layout, 4th Block, in Ullal Ward of the Yeshwantpur Assembly constituency.

Somashekar said the modern facility has been designed on the lines of IT and BT company campuses and

stands out as a model office building in Bengaluru. He noted that the new infrastructure would help improve public service delivery and make it easier for consumers to access BESCOM services.

Praising the efforts of BESCOM officials, the MLA said Executive Engineer N. Shivakumar and his team had been working effectively under the guidance of senior officers to provide permanent solutions to consumer grievances and improve service standards.

Kengeri Division West Zone Executive Engineer N. Shivakumar said the project became possible due to the support and grant assistance extended by Somashekar. He expressed confidence that the new office would help officials respond to consumer complaints more efficiently and further strengthen BESCOM's service network in the area.

Chief Engineer Kashi Ram Pawar, Superintendent Engineer Narayanaswamy, Women Block President Suma Janardhan, Anil Kumar, Devaraj, Ramesh Gowda, Prakash Gowda, Amanullah and several local residents and BESCOM officials attended the inauguration programme.

CONGRESS OFFICE PLAN

DKS plans Congress Bhavan bhoomi puja on swearing-in day

BENGALURU

Chief Minister-designate D K Shivakumar said the Congress is considering performing the bhoomi puja for its proposed state headquarters near Race Course Road on June 3, the same day as his swearing-in ceremony as Karnataka Chief Minister.

Speaking to reporters after inspecting the site earmarked for the construction of the new Congress Bhavan, Shivakumar said the timing of the foundation-laying ceremony would be finalised after consultations

with Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi.

He said invitations would be extended to district and block-level Congress office-bearers, MLAs, former legislators, MPs, heads of party frontal organisations and chairpersons of various boards and corporations.

"The public will not be allowed to attend the programme because of space constraints. We request party workers to excuse us. Only invited guests will be accommodated," Shivakumar said.

He added that an invitation would soon be handed over to Rahul Gandhi and that preparations were underway to hold the foundation stone-laying ceremony under his leadership.

Shivakumar said arrangements were also being made to allow party leaders and workers who could not attend the swearing-in ceremony to watch the proceedings on LED screens at the Congress Bhavan site."Many of our leaders and workers have fought and worked hard for the party. Since it is not possible to accommodate everyone at the swearing-in event, we want to provide them an opportunity to participate in the celebrations through this programme," he said.

Explaining the decision to hold the swearing-in ceremony at Lok Bhavan instead of the steps of Vidhana Soudha, Shivakumar said the move was intended to minimise inconvenience to Bengaluru residents and prevent major traffic congestion caused by the arrival of large numbers of visitors from across the state.

"It will be a simple ceremony. Not everyone will be able to attend, and our workers should understand the limitations," he said.

When asked whether other ministers would take oath alongside him, Shivakumar declined to comment, saying the decision rested entirely with the Congress high command.

"I do not know about that. The party leadership will decide, and I will not comment on the matter," he said.

Candidates seek BESCOM final Junior Powerman list

BENGALURU

Candidates shortlisted for recrui tment to 90 Junior Powerman posts have urged Bangalore Ele ctricity Supply Company to immediately publish the final selection list.BESCOM had invit ed applications in October 2024, and the provisional selection list was released in March 2026. However, candida tes say the final list has not been annou nced even after nea rly thr ee months, causing uncertainty abo ut their future.

QUICK READ

Children welcomed with sweets at Mandya School

Mandya

Children were warmly welcomed with sweets and flowers at the inauguration of Good Shepherd Baby Care and Good Shepherd Pre-Primary School in Mandya. Good Shepherd Education Trust organised the programme, where returning students were greeted after vacation. Pastor of Sade Temple G. Mohan Kumar praised the effort to create interest in school learning among children. Trust leaders George Mohan Kumar, Richard Thomas Kumar, Thomas Benjamin, Morris Jaikumari and engineer Channaramu attended the programme and supported the initiative. Officials said the welcoming event helped children feel happy and motivated for new academic year in Mandya district schools program concluded successfully.

Power disruption today

Mysuru

Power supply will be disrupted intermittently on June 2 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. due to first-quarter maintenance works being undertaken by the power utility at the 66/11 kV Bannimantap Power Distribution Centre.

The major areas likely to be affected include S.S. Nagar, Kaveri Nagar, Siddiqui Nagar, Bannimantap 'B' Layout, Highway Circle, Medar Block, Hanumanthanagar, Aleem Nagar, Bala Bhavan, JSS Dental College, St. Joseph's Hospital, Lakshmipuram, Siddalingapura, Kalasthavadi, Shyadanahalli, Naganahalli, K.R. Mill Colony, and surrounding localities, according to a press release from Executive Engineer of the Narasimharaja Mohalla Division of the power supply company.

Power outages from June 2 to 4

Power outages from June 2 to 4

Power supply will be interrupted from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on June 2, 3, and 4 in the following areas under the Jyothinagar Sub-Division due to underground cable laying works.

Areas affected: June 2: Yaraganahalli, Raghavendra Nagar.

June 3: JSS Layout, Shakti Nagar, Tiers Layout, and Dr. Rajkumar Road (from Teresian Circle to Ganesha Temple).

June 4: Dr. Rajkumar Road (from Teresian Circle towards Yaraganahalli) and Raghavendra Nagar.

Residents in these areas are advised to make necessary arrangements in view of the scheduled power interruptions.

World Milk Day celebrated in Mysuru

Event highlights women's empowerment and farmers' welfare

MYSURU

World Milk Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Mysuru on Monday under the special theme "Celebrating the Strength of Women Farmers."

A colourful procession featuring horse-drawn carriages and motorcycles was organized, with participants carrying hundreds of placards bearing messages such as "Our Nandini, Our Pride," "Use Nandini Milk and Support Farmers," and "Dr. Verghese Kurien, Father of the White Revolution."

The awareness rally, organized by the Mysuru District Cooperative Milk Producers' Societies Union Ltd. (Mymul) as part of World Milk Day celebrations, was flagged off by the Union's Administrator C. Prasad Reddy from the Union office in Alanahalli Layout. The procession passed through Bannur Main Road, Teresian College Circle, the New Deputy Commissioner's Office Road, and Nazarbad Police Station before concluding at Kuppanna Park.

Seven decorated horse-drawn carriages displayed posters highlighting the importance of milk and Nandini products. Thousands of Mymul employees and supporters also participated in a motorcycle rally to create awareness among the public.

Speaking on the occasion, Reddy said that World Milk Day has been observed globally since 2001 under the initiative of the United Nations. A good health is essential for economic progress and that milk plays a vital role in providing the nutrition necessary for a healthy life. The celebration aims to spread awareness about the importance of milk among people worldwide.

He said while milk adulteration is reported in some private organizations, Nandini products maintain 100 percent purity. Milk is one of the most important food products globally and that India ranks first in milk production worldwide. This year's World Milk Day is being celebrated with a focus on women's empowerment.

Mymul Managing Director K.N. Suresh Naik said World Milk Day is observed to promote awareness about milk and support the interests of dairy farmers. Since milk production is increasing globally, the day serves as an opportunity to educate people about the benefits of consuming milk and dairy products.

Describing milk as a complete food, he explained that while different grains contain specific vitamins, milk contains a wide range of nutrients and vitamins essential for the human body. This comprehensive nutritional value makes milk a highly balanced food, and World Milk Day helps communicate this importance to society.

He also noted that around 550,000 dairy animals are involved in milk production across Mysuru district. Urban areas witness higher milk demand due to greater population density, whereas in rural areas families first use milk for their own needs before supplying the surplus to the market.

Referring to the sponsorship of the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) cricket team by Nandini, he remarked that Nandini's association with the team has enhanced its popularity and pride among consumers. He jokingly added that Nandini's strength was behind RCB's success.

Soumya, Manager of Mymul's Administrative Division, said the motorcycle rally was organized as part of World Milk Day celebrations. She emphasized that greater use of Nandini products directly contributes to the welfare of dairy farmers.

She highlighted that more than 300 women-led dairy cooperative societies are functioning under the Union, demonstrating the success of women's empowerment initiatives. She also pointed out that Mysuru Dairy employs a large number of women, further reflecting the Union's commitment to gender empowerment.

Girija, Manager of Mymul's Engineering Division, said Nandini is a matter of pride for Karnataka and urged people to use Nandini milk regularly to support farmers. She encouraged the public to promote the use of Nandini products at social and community events.

The programme was attended by General Manager Jayashankar, managers Girija, Kari Basavaraju, N. Soumya, Babita, deputy managers, officials, office-bearers of the employees' association, and members of the staff, all of whom contributed to the success of the event.

Fruits distribution marked hunger relief program

MYSURU

The Alliance Club of Mysore Imperial successfully conducted a Hunger Relief Program by distributing fresh fruits to the children of Jeevanadi seva Samsthe an Orphanage, in Hanchya Village, Mysore.

This noble initiative was generously sponsored and supported by Dr. Deepti. As a part of the initiative, a Nutrition Awareness Talk was delivered by Suvarna, Charter Treasurer, highlighting the importance of healthy eating habits, balanced nutrition, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The program was led by Samira Sultana, Charter President, who encouraged the team to continue serving the community through meaningful humanitarian activities.

The event was also graced by the presence of Board Members Afza Kulsum and Md. Sadiq, whose support and participation contributed to the success of the program.

The initiative aimed to promote both food security and nutritional awareness, reinforcing the club's commitment to community welfare and healthy living.

Differently abled employees demand equal rights

DHARWAD

Leaders H P Kadlimatti, R R Talawara and Shivananda Savasuddi said UDID approval exists but state procedures delay benefits, demanding equal treatment, simplified verification and nondiscrimination

Members of the Karnataka State Government Disabled Employees Association have urged the government to immediately address long pending demands of differently abled employees working across departments in the district.

District President Dr Shivananda Khavatakoppa said that differently abled employees are facing many difficulties and government attention towards their issues is very limited. He demanded that all their concerns be solved on compassionate grounds without delay for fair treatment in service matters.

At the annual general meeting held in Dharwad, association leaders said that travelling allowance benefits are not being properly given to teaching staff and in some cases city allowances are being deducted unfairly. They alleged that such practices violate the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 and called it discrimination against Divyang employees.

Leaders H P Kadlimatti, R R Talawara and Shivananda Savasuddi said that although the central government has approved use of UDID cards for benefits, state level procedures still require additional certificates causing unnecessary delays and hardship for employees.

They demanded that UDID cards should be accepted at all levels for promotions transfers and other service benefits without repeated verification requirements.

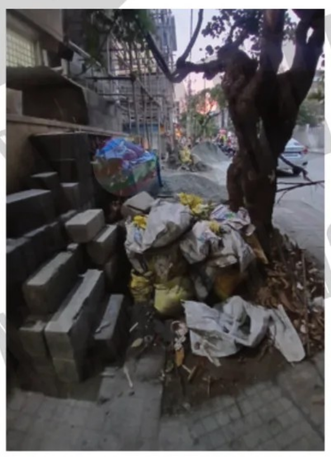
Association members also said that differently abled employees should receive equal treatment in salary allowances and administrative processes without discrimination compared to other government staff.

During the event Dr Shivananda Khavatakoppa was honoured for his efforts in representing employee concerns and working continuously for their welfare.

Several association leaders including Santosh Karamallavara N S Kalikotimath Ashoka Kotalli and Sheetala Samaje attended the meeting and supported the demands raised by the members for immediate government action and policy correction in favour of differently abled employees across Karnataka.

Pending construction disrupts daily pedestrian movement

SHARON FAUSTINA J



A construction activity on the 80 feet road in Kamanahalli near Corner House Ice Creams has raised serious concern as it has blocked the footpath and forced pedestrians to walk on the busy road risking safety.

Residents said the construction has been going on for several years and raw materials such as cement bricks and iron rods have been dumped directly on the footpath making movement extremely difficult for people in the area.

Local residents complained that there is no proper space allocated for storing construction material and the entire footpath has been occupied causing inconvenience especially during peak hours when the road is heavily crowded.

A woman reportedly fell after stepping on scattered stones on the footpath and suffered minor injuries while residents demand that the authorities take immediate action and clear the blocked walkway within a few weeks.

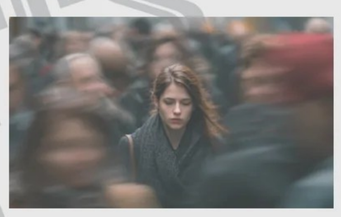
Authorities have not yet given a proper response when contacted and residents insist that strict action should be taken against illegal occupation of public space to ensure pedestrian safety and smooth movement in this busy commercial locality.

Pedestrians and daily commuters said the obstruction has become a regular problem and the lack of enforcement has worsened the situation in this part of Bengaluru where commercial activity remains high throughout the day. Many shop owners nearby expressed concern that customers find it difficult to reach stores due to blocked access and unsafe walking conditions along the road forcing them onto moving traffic lanes increasing the risk of accidents and highlighting the urgent need for municipal intervention and monitoring.

Residents urged the civic authorities and local municipal body to immediately clear the encroachment and ensure strict action against violations of footpath usage rules. They also appealed for proper regulation of construction sites in busy commercial areas to prevent public inconvenience in the future. Citizens said that public space must remain accessible and safe for everyone and repeated violations should not be ignored.

How safe do women feel in Bengaluru?

RASHIDA AAMIR, SUHANA SHIPRA



Women's safety has never been black and white – it's largely a grey topic, more than safety being about a woman's autonomy, it has always been adjacent to past traditions, norms, legalities, patriarchy, and capitalism. Even in metropolitan cities known to be progressive and culturally educated, questions regarding women's safety are yet to be answered.

To answer some of the questions, we circulated a Google Form Survey about women's safety in Bengaluru covering relevant questions about societal norms, gender inequality, loopholes within legalities, and measures taken by women to feel safer. The 29 participants ranged from 18 year olds to 45 year olds with 89% young adults and 11% middle aged women. The responses reflect how safe or unsafe the participants felt while traveling. The majority felt safe traveling during the day, while traveling during the night received mixed responses, majority saying 'sometimes' and 'no.'

Bengaluru, an expensive city, makes one wonder if it is more expensive to be safe as a woman. The responses were as follows, 61% said 'yes' while noting that they choose to travel by autos and Namma Metro instead of buses. Whilst 4 million people use the BMTC buses on a daily basis, the survey revealed that it is the most unsafe mode of transportation. Alongside, places like Koramangala, Church Street, and Russell Market were regarded as places where the participants have had the most uncomfortable experiences like unsettling gawking and catcalling.

We interviewed a women's rights activist Shaswati Priyadarshini Sahoo to learn her perspective. For when legalities fail, how it forces women to take measures for their own safety. When asked what measures the participants take to feel safe, many said they travel with friends, share live locations with parents, and avoid isolated places. "Safety for women isn't a women's issue but a civic failure." said a 20 year old on the survey.

Sahoo stated that women's safety is still considered a women's issue because society often deflects responsibility and has a long history of blaming women rather than holding perpetrators accountable. Questioning women's clothes, behavior, choices instead of addressing the mindset and environment that enables such crime. "Prevention only delays finding an actual solution, prevention being regressive in nature more often restricts women instead of changing one's mindset, giving perpetrators upper hand by accusing women rather than holding criminals accountable."

Panels regulating women's rights are often never equally representative resulting in a biased verdict. Sahoo stated that men voting on women's issues turns out to be a form of self-observer bias, which may distort the decision making process and overlook women's concern and perspective. Women's issues should primarily be discussed and represented with an active involvement of women, because they're the ones being directly affected by it.

The power to change lies in our generation from households to the government. Our dedicated minds can work towards making our country, and the world, a safe place for women to live.

Festive atmosphere prevail at Govt Schools in Mysuru

MYSURU

The new academic year officially commenced today after the summer vacation, and the learning festival for children in government schools was launched with great enthusiasm by K. Harish Gowda, MLA of Chamaraja Constituency.

Welcoming students back to school, the MLA distributed textbooks and school bags and conveyed his best wishes for the new academic year. The Taluk-level School Reopening Celebration and Mega Parents' Meeting was organized by the Office of the Block Education Officer and the Block Coordination Office for the Mysuru South educational zone at the Government High School, Kukkarahalli.

Speaking after inaugurating the programme, Harish Gowda said that students had returned to school after enjoying their summer holidays and emphasized that government schools provide equal and quality education to all children without any discrimination. Teachers are imparting quality education tailored to the needs of every child. The public and philanthropists are generously contributing to government schools, helping them grow and achieve higher standards. The parents to enroll their children in government schools in larger numbers.

Stressing the importance of education, Gowda said that no child should be deprived of learning opportunities. Education is the key to attaining higher positions in life, and knowledge and expertise open doors to better opportunities and success. The value of education has increased significantly in today's competitive world. The Class 10 students must focus seriously on their studies from the very beginning of the academic year. They must to listen attentively to their teachers, work diligently, and strive to score high marks in examinations, which would help them secure admission to reputed institutions for higher education.Block Education Officer (BEO) Krishna stressed that the government schools today provide excellent education and students must make the best use of the opportunities available to them. The government offers numerous free facilities and welfare measures to support students' academic progress. Students should utilize these benefits effectively to acquire knowledge and develop expertise in various fields.

Govt schools now competing with Pvt schools: MLA T. Srivatsa

MYSURU

The days when people looked down upon government schools are now a thing of the past, as government institutions are increasingly providing quality education and modern facilities, said Krishnaraja constituency MLA T. Srivatsa.

Speaking after inaugurating the Taluk-level School Reopening Festival and Maha Parent-Teacher Meeting organized by the Office of the Block Education Officer and the Office of the Field Coordinator for the Mysuru South educational zone at Karnataka Public School, Kuvempunagar on Monday, he said government schools are now emerging as strong competitors to private schools.

Highlighting the improvement in academic performance, Srivatsa noted that in 2023, only four students from government schools had scored 620 marks in the SSLC examination. Since then, the number has been steadily increasing, demonstrating that government schools are becoming centres of quality education. Earlier, many people would turn up their noses at the mention of a government school. That perception has changed significantly. Through quality teaching and state-of-the-art facilities, government schools today are on par with private institutions.

He pointed out that government schools now have new buildings, modern sanitation facilities, and a supportive learning environment.

QUICK READ

Free Online Yoga Training Begins Nationwide Today

Chikkaballapura

The Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, has suggested celebrating the 12th International Yoga Day on June 21 across the country. The Morarji Desai Yoga Association, New Delhi is conducting a free 14-day online yoga training programme for participants. This training is organised by the Ministry of AYUSH and requires registration on the official portal Ministry of AYUSH Yoga Portal. District authorities have asked all staff and officers to enrol and submit details to the District AYUSH Office. Participants will complete training and join International Yoga Day celebrations.

Free heart checkups for children

Chitradurga

Free heart check-ups for children will be conducted on the first Wednesday of every month at the Mother and Child Hospital in the District Hospital premises under a joint initiative of the District Hospital and Narayana Health. Pediatric cardiologist Dr. G.S. Anil Kumar will examine children from 10.30 am to 1 pm. Parents are advised to seek immediate medical attention if children show symptoms such as repeated infections, blue lips or skin, breathing difficulty, wheezing, irregular heartbeat or persistent cough. Contact 9535025743 or 7259759982 for more details.

Lack of staff quarters leaves Kollur police personnel struggling

Kollur

Police personnel serving at the Kollur Police Station continue to face a major challenge unrelated to law and order — the absence of official residential quarters. Despite handling a vast jurisdiction and performing round-the-clock duties, many officers are forced to stay in rented houses and private lodges due to the lack of government accommodation.

The police station has a strength of 28 personnel, including the Sub-Inspector, Assistant Sub-Inspector, constables and women police officers. Since departmental housing facilities are unavailable, several staff members have been residing in rented accommodations in and around Kollur, while some have opted to stay in distant areas such as Idur and Vandse to reduce rental expenses.

The station covers an extensive area that includes Kollur, Jadkal, Halkal, Mudoor, Salkodu, Keradi, Bellal, Vandse, Chittoor and Maranakatte, requiring police personnel to travel long distances for investigations, patrols and emergency responses.

Siddu dumped debt-ridden govt on DKS' shoulders: Ashoka

BENGALURU

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R Ashoka on Monday said though the Modi government has taken loans, it has spent around ₹170 lakh crore on railways, bridges, and highways, but the Congress government in Karnataka has spent nothing to ensure progress of the state.

Addressing the media here, he said they boast about spending ₹65,000 crore on guarantees, while also imposing an additional ₹65,000 crore in new taxes. "Every year, ₹38,000 crore is being paid as interest on the loans taken."

Future outlook

"DK Shivakumar cannot reduce taxes because there is already a ₹19,262 crore deficit. In reality, the deficit is even higher. Revenue has further dropped due to the e-Khata system. Though they call it 'free', officials are collecting thousands of rupees in bribes. The new Chief Minister will bring no benefit to the people," he said.

"I will definitely ensure that the pending amounts for Gruha Lakshmi and Annabhagya are paid back. I will continue to fight for this. The BJP has accepted this as a challenge," Ashoka said.

'Despite 2 assembly sessions, development eludes NK'

- ₹4,500 crore for Shakti scheme
- ₹2,000 crore to transport staff
- ₹600 crore for Annabhagya
- ₹73 crore for orphan children
- ₹23 crore for beggars' welfare
- ₹38,000 crore to contractors
- ₹12,500 crore to ESCOMs
- ₹5,000 crore for Gruha Lakshmi

He further said despite holding two sessions in Belagavi, the Congress government could not bring development to North Karnataka.

Siddaramaiah, who had once rebelled against former Prime Minister Deve Gowda, has now quietly handed over the power as the government has a pending payments of ₹75,689 crore, which includes:

This is why Siddaramaiah has dumped the responsibility on DK Shivakumar as he will not be able to clear all these dues, Ashoka said, adding that everyone praised Siddaramaiah for handing over power gracefully, but this is the real secret behind it.

'Siddaramaiah never attended Central meetings'

"Siddaramaiah never attended meetings called by the Central Government. But he ran to the High Command only when his son wanted power. In these three years, he did nothing except blame the Centre. A faction within Congress is trying to suppress Siddaramaiah's gang. A new team is likely to emerge excluding Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar. After the swearing-in, the internal fighting will begin again," he added.

Power outage to hit Chitradurga city

CHITRADURGA

Due to urgent maintenance work on the 11 KV F-08 Industrial Area line under Chitradurga Nagar Subdivision Unit-1, there will be a scheduled power outage on June 02 from 10 am to 6 pm affecting several parts of Chitradurga city. It will affect Chitradurga Nagar Industrial Area, Old Bangalore Road, Challakere Gate, Vemana Nagar, Narayanappa Layout, Adishakti Nagar and nearby regions. Consumers are requested to cooperate during the maintenance work. The Assistant Executive Engineer of BESCOM Chitradurga Nagar Subdivision has informed that the supply will be restored after completion of work on the same day.

Serial thefts in Belthangady raise questions over night patrolling

BELTHANGADY

A series of thefts reported at 11 different locations across Belthangady town on the night of May 18 has triggered concern among residents, with many questioning the effectiveness of police surveillance and night patrolling in the area.

According to reports, thieves targeted multiple establishments, including hotels, a lawyer's office and a finance company. The incidents have sparked widespread discussion, with locals expressing fears that the case may join the growing list of unresolved thefts in the taluk.

What has particularly surprised residents is that several of the targeted buildings are located close to the Belthangady police station. The fact that thefts occurred along roads leading to the station has raised doubts about the adequacy of police monitoring during nighttime hours.

Residents argue that carrying out thefts at 11 locations would have required considerable time, leading to suspicions that the area lacked sufficient police presence. Some citizens have also alleged that calls made to authorities regarding public issues often do not receive timely responses.

Another concern highlighted by residents is the shortage of CCTV cameras in key areas of the town. They believe the absence of a comprehensive surveillance network has made it easier for criminals to operate without being identified.Local advocate B.M. Bhat criticised the police response, alleging that previous theft cases in the town also remained unsolved. He urged authorities to take stronger measures to prevent recurring incidents and ensure accountability.

Government schools face decline warns ADC Kumaraswamy

CHITRADURGA

Additional Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy said that government schools are facing a serious risk of decline and need collective effort from parents and teachers to survive and grow.

Speaking at the school opening ceremony in Doddasiddavvanahalli village he said government schools are not lacking infrastructure or trained teachers but public mindset is still biased against them which is worrying for education development.

He shared that he began his career as a primary school teacher and rose to the position of Additional District Collector through education and guidance from teachers stressing that teachers must keep learning new skills and prepare students for a competitive and technology driven world. Parents should move away from the idea of only government jobs and instead encourage children to develop life skills because many successful people are farmers and entrepreneurs without government employment.

District education officials said the government is focusing on strengthening public schools by introducing bilingual education in Kannada and English from classes one to five and by training teachers through structured programs. They also announced 15-day and 30-day bridging programmes and said students are being provided free uniforms, textbooks, scholarships, computer education and laboratory facilities without cost.

ADC said he started as a primary teacher, became Additional District Collector, urging teachers to upskill and parents to value life skills over government jobs

At the event free uniforms and textbooks were distributed to students and SSLC toppers were honoured for their academic performance. The programme was attended by officials from the education department school development committee members teachers farmer leaders and local representatives who stressed the importance of improving government school enrolment and quality education in rural areas. District officials said the new academic year initiatives aim to reduce dropout rates and improve learning outcomes through better infrastructure and continuous monitoring. Students received learning materials while parents were urged to spend time daily with children and support their education journey at home. Authorities said education is the strongest tool for empowerment and urged collective responsibility to strengthen government schools for future generations. Teachers and officials reaffirmed their commitment to improving enrolment ensuring quality teaching and building confidence among students in government institutions across the district. The initiative reflects strong efforts to revive and strengthen public education system statewide programme.

Health officer Dr Mahesh Kumar explained tobacco history, impacts on body, and high addiction levels per national surveys

Youth urged to stay away from tobacco addiction

CHIKKABALLAPURA

World No Tobacco Day was observed at Nagarjuna Pre-University College in Bidaganahalli where officials and judges stressed the need for youth to avoid addiction and protect their health through awareness and discipline.

Principal District and Sessions Judge and District Legal Services Authority Chairman T P Ramalingegowda said young people are most vulnerable to bad habits during adolescence and must stay alert as tobacco use continues to cause serious harm worldwide despite strict laws.

He said millions of deaths occur every year due to tobacco consumption and reminded students that health is in their own hands encouraging them to make responsible life choices and avoid harmful substances.

Senior Civil Judge and District Legal Services Authority Member Secretary B Shilpa administered an oath against tobacco use and warned that social media influence is pushing many young people toward addiction which can destroy their future.

She urged students to maintain self control and report illegal activities to the legal services authority to help protect society from the spread of drug related problems and harmful practices in their surroundings.

District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr Mahesh Kumar explained the history and impact of tobacco saying it affects every organ of the body and shared that addiction levels remain high according to national health survey data.

He also informed that a dedicated tobacco de addiction centre is functioning at the district hospital offering free counselling and treatment services for those who want to quit tobacco consumption and live a healthier life.

Additional Superintendent of Police Jagannath Roy warned that tobacco and drug use is spreading among both men and women and said illegal sale near schools and hookah bars must be reported immediately to authorities or emergency helpline 112.

Bar Association President K V Abhilash said youth are the strength of the nation and must stay away from harmful habits to build a strong and healthy society for the future.

College Principal Thippeswamy said many students fall into addiction due to peer pressure and social influence and advised them to seek help through Tele Manas helpline 14416 during stress or emotional difficulty.

Parents demand urgent action as bridge project disrupts students' commute in Neerkere

MANGALURU

A major infrastructure project intended to improve connectivity has instead created uncertainty for dozens of schoolchildren in Neerkere village, where access to schools has become difficult due to the ongoing construction of a bridge across the Nandini River.

As schools reopened across Karnataka on Monday, parents in Thenkamijaru Gram Panchayat expressed concern over the lack of safe transport arrangements for children affected by the project.

The bridge, being built at an estimated cost of ₹9 crore, required the construction of a temporary mud road for public movement. However, with heavy rains increasing the river's flow, the temporary route has been removed, leaving residents without a convenient connection.

Villagers allege that authorities launched the bridge project without adequately considering the needs of schoolchildren. They say no contingency plan was put in place despite repeated requests for alternative arrangements.

The disappearance of the temporary road has affected everyday movement in the area, with students among the worst hit. Residents fear the situation may worsen as the monsoon intensifies and waterlogging develops on both sides of the river.

Although authorities have opened an old bridge for use, locals say the route is not practical for children. Many students are unfamiliar with the path, while flooded plantation areas and the presence of stray dogs make the journey difficult and potentially unsafe.

Community members have urged district officials to arrange special transportation services or establish a temporary alternative route to ensure uninterrupted access to schools.

RURAL-AGRI-CELEBRATION

Mango Mela 2026 boosts farmers hope

SRINIVASPUR

Two-day Mango Mela 2026 held in Srinivaspur, widely known as Karnataka mango capital, concluded with large participation from farmers, traders, experts and visitors, making it a major agricultural celebration focused on mango cultivation, marketing and rural development.

Farmers from the region highlighted challenges such as price fluctuation, market dependence and lack of direct access, while the event aimed to explore solutions through value addition, better marketing and improved income opportunities for mango growers.

Inauguration of the mela was led by Ravi Krishna Reddy along with Neelatur Chinnappa Reddy and Indira Reddy, who marked the opening by watering a mango sapling as a symbol of sustainable agriculture and environmental care.

The mela featured mango varieties, value-added products and exhibitions where visitors tasted juices, ice creams, jams and sweets while experts guided farmers on scientific farming, processing and better market practices for future growth.

Cultural programmes, recognition of contributors and family activities made the event lively, while organisers announced plans to expand Mango Mela in future to promote Srinivaspur mango identity at national and international levels.

Mango Mela 2026 created strong awareness about sustainable farming and improved marketing opportunities for local growers in Srinivaspur region. It also encouraged farmers to adopt modern techniques, value addition practices and direct market linkages to increase income and reduce dependency on intermediaries while supporting long term agricultural growth in the district.

Residents launch drive to restore historic Kotikere lake in Vittla

VITTLA

Residents of Vittla have come together to revive the historic Kotikere lake, a waterbody that has played a vital role in the region's agricultural, cultural and sporting heritage for decades.

The restoration work began on May 24 through a community-led shramadana (voluntary labour) initiative aimed at desilting the lake and rebuilding its damaged retaining walls. The project has received an enthusiastic response from local residents, former swimmers and community leaders.

Constructed during the era of the Vittla royal family, the lake measures nearly 75 metres in length and 20 metres in width. Historically, it served multiple purposes, including daily household use, religious rituals, irrigation and groundwater recharge. Local historians also associate the region with events linked to India's freedom struggle, when areas around Vittla reportedly served as shelters for freedom fighters.

Kotikere is particularly remembered as a cradle of swimming talent.

QUICK READ

Mandya to host Rajarishi Wodeyar jayanti program

CH NEWS, Mandya District administration and Kannada and Culture Department will organize the Rajarishi Sri Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar Jayanti programme on June 04. A decorated portrait procession will start at 9 am from the District Collector's Office via Sanjay Circle, Mahavir Circle and V V Road and reach Dr B R Ambedkar Bhawan.

The main stage programme will be held at 11 am. Several religious leaders, ministers, MLAs and officials will participate. Jagadguru Sri Dr Nirmalanandanath Swamiji will preside. Jagadguru Sri Dr Nischalanandanath Swamiji and Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy will also attend. A special lecture will be delivered by writer M Ramakrishna.

Auto drivers meeting held in Hunsur City

CH NEWS, Hunsur

A meeting of auto drivers and owners was held at Hunsur City Police Station where police officers addressed safety and discipline rules. DySP Ravi said drivers must wear uniforms and keep proper vehicle records. Inspector M Shivamadaya advised polite behaviour with passen gers, avoiding overcharging and following fixed fares. PSI Tajuddin explai ned traffic rules and war ned of strict action against harassment of school and college students. Around 200 to 250 drivers attended the meeting.

Officials urge cooperation in electoral roll update

The draft voter list will be published on Aug 5 : claims/objections can be filed until Sept 4: will be resolved by Oct 3, and final list will be released on Oct 7

MANDYA

The Election Commission has announced the Special Comprehensive Revision of Voters List for 2026, with officials urging political parties and voters to actively cooperate in the transparent and structured exercise aimed at updating electoral rolls across the district.

District officials informed representatives of various political parties at the Deputy Commissioner's office that the revision process is designed to include all eligible voters while removing ineligible names from the list as per election rules and guidelines.

According to the schedule, training for Booth Level Officers will be held from June 20 to June 29, followed by a door to door survey and distribution of enumeration forms from June 30 to July 29 across all polling stations in Mandya district.

Voters will also have the option to submit forms online, while officials confirmed that a report on polling booth restructuring will be submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer on July 29 as part of the preparation process.

The draft voters list will be published on August 5, after which claims and objections can be filed from August 5 to September 4, and these will be resolved between August 5 and October 3 before the final list is released on October 7.

Officials warned that if voters fail to submit signed enumeration forms to Booth Level Officers their names may not appear in the draft list, but they will still have a chance to apply during the objection period with valid documents.

Each Booth Level Officer will visit households at least three times and if voters are not available reports will be submitted accordingly, while eligible family members above 18 years can sign forms on behalf of households.

District officials said there are 1,823 polling booths across seven assembly constituencies in Mandya with over 1.57 lakh voters registered including male female and third gender voters and all booths have designated officers appointed for smooth execution.

Joint Director Prateek Hegde and Election Tahsildar C J Ravi Shankar were present along with representatives of major political parties including Congress, JD S, BJP, AAP, BSP and CPI M who were briefed on the process.

Officials stressed that the success of the revision depends on cooperation between voters, political parties and election staff to ensure an accurate and updated electoral roll for the upcoming election process in the district.

Commissioner reviews Parappana Agrahara lake condition

BENGALURU

Commissioner K N Ramesh of Bengaluru South City Corporation visited Parappana Agrahara Lake, Haralur Lake and Kudlu Doddakere Lake in Bommanahalli zone to review their condition and plans for overall development.

During the inspection he found that sewage water was entering the lakes and causing pollution. He instructed officials to take immediate action to stop sewage inflow and protect lake water quality.

He directed officials to create proper barriers and take corrective measures so that contaminated water does not mix with the lakes in future.

The Commissioner also instructed the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board to speed up underground drainage pipeline works in the surrounding areas to prevent further sewage entry into the lakes.

He asked Bengaluru South City Corporation officials to coordinate closely with BWSSB and ensure that all necessary steps are taken for effective lake protection and maintenance.

He further directed officials to prepare a detailed project report for comprehensive development of the three lakes including fencing around lake boundaries construction of retaining walls and improvement of surrounding infrastructure.

The aim of these measures is to protect lake ecosystems improve water quality and ensure long term sustainability of urban water bodies in the city.

Officials present during the inspection included Chief Engineer K V Ravi Executive Engineers Deepa and Usha along with other civic staff who supported the review process.

The visit highlighted growing concern over urban lake conservation and the need for coordinated action between civic agencies to protect natural water resources in Bengaluru.

Authorities said that timely execution of drainage works and strict monitoring will help restore lake health and prevent further environmental damage in the coming months across the Bommanahalli region.

Health Officer warns public on snakebite safety

CHIKKABALLAPURA

District Health Officer Dr. Mahesh Kumar said people should not fear snake bites but remain alert. Non venomous snake bites may cause mild swelling, redness, bleeding at bite site and skin color changes depending on the snake.

Venomous snake bites can cause pain, weakness, sweating, drooling, nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness and blurred vision. Severe venom symptoms include uncontrolled ble eding, low blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, breathing difficulty, muscle cramps, numbness and heavy swelling. Do not panic, keep victim calm, move awa y from snake, remove tight ite ms like shoes, belts and jewellery and take patient quickly to hospital. Do not cut wound, apply chemicals, suck venom or use tight tourniquets. Avoid her bal or unsafe tre atments and do not waste time catching snake. To prevent snake bites, keep surrou ndings clean, cut bushes, avoid garbageac cumulation and use torchat night while wal king outdoors. Wear rubber boots in fiel ds, check objects before use and sleep under mosquito nets to re duce risk of bites. Avoid wal kin g barefoot or sitting on ground in bushy are as as snakes may hide and attack unexpectedly.

Kolar DC warns labour officials over negligence

KOLAR

Officials reported 14 court cases and 1.6 lakh fines, but DC said awareness and strict action are needed, urging faster release certificates for bonded labourers

Deputy Commissioner Dr M R Ravi expressed strong dissatisfaction over poor enforcement against child labour and bonded labour in the district during a task force meeting held on Monday. He said only 14 child labourers were rescued last year and only 37 inspections were conducted which he called highly insufficient for the scale of the problem.

Officials informed that 14 cases were filed in courts and penalties of one point six lakh rupees were collected but the DC said fines alone will not solve the issue. He directed officials to hold awareness meetings with shop owners and industrial units at taluk level and ensure strict action against tho se employing children. He also expressed concern over delays in issuing release certificates to rescued bonded labourers and instructed officials to speed up the process without delay.

He warned that failure to conduct regular inspections and update child labour project bylaws would lead to strict action against responsible officers. Officials said awareness programmes will be held on June 12 for World Day Against Child Labour and messages will be spread through waste collection vehicle jingles.

Senior officials including police zilla panchayat labour and social welfare department officers attended the meeting and supported strict enforcement measures across the district.

Dr Ravi said eradication of child labour and bonded labour must not remain only on paper and stressed that negligence by officials will face strict disciplinary action while asking departments to improve coordination and field monitoring across all taluks in Kolar district to protect children and ensure rehabilitation of rescued workers through proper government schemes and timely support services and he also instructed all inspectors to meet weekly and monthly targets without fail and ensure inspections are documented properly and violations are reported immediately to higher authorities so that timely legal action can be taken and awareness among the public is increased through continuous campaigns involving schools local bodies and community organisations.

Somanna said village development is vital for national progress, with railways linking rural areas to cities and industry

Railways key to national growth says Somanna

HASSAN

Minister of State for Railways V Somanna said that railway development is the biggest driver of India's overall growth and highlighted massive investme nts being made to expand rail connectivity across the country.

He said the central government is spending about three lakh crore rupees every year on railway projects under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to improve connectivity even in rural areas. Speaking at Channarayapatna railway station he flagged off the halting facility for the Hassan Solapur train and said such developments will help strengthen regional transport and economic activity.

Somanna said development of villages is essential for national progress and added that railways play a key role in linking rural regions with cities and industrial centres. He praised former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda for his efforts in improving railway connectivity in Hassan district and said the region continues to benefit from those initiatives.

He noted that Hassan railway station currently handles 34 trains daily and said the introduction of additional services including a Bharat train will further improve passenger convenience. The minister said railway infrastructure has improved significantly in the last decade with faster construction of overbridges and installation of thousands of safety gates across the country. He said earlier railway bridge projects took up to 20 years but now they are completed in a few years due to faster implementation systems and improved planning.

Somanna said around 13,800 railway crossing gates have been installed in the last ten years and many ongoing projects in Karnataka are progressing rapidly under central support. He added that 707 railway crossing works have been completed and 400 more are underway in Karnataka since he assumed responsibility in the railway department.

The minister said train coaches have been upgraded from 12 to 21 bogies in several routes and speed improvements are being planned on key railway lines including Hassan Bengaluru corridor. He also said Channarayapatna is an important gateway connecting historic and religious places like Belur Halebidu and Shravanabelagola and the new stop will benefit thousands of passengers daily. Somanna said about 2000 railway stations are being moderni sed across India including 61 stations in Karnataka under the Amrit Bharat scheme to improve passenger facilities and comfort.

Ambedkar statue event calls for equality

HUNSUR

Former MLA H P Manjunath said Hunsur Mahaniya should not be limited to any single caste and a full scale census will be conducted in 2027 where all communities must provide complete family details without omission.

He was speaking at the unveiling of Dr B R Ambedkar statue in Hindugudlu village of Hanagodu hobli during a programme held on the occasion of Ambedkar 135th birth anniversary organized under DSS district convener Kiranguru Swamy.

Manjunath said that after 1931 the central government has taken steps for a nationwide census and accurate population data is important for fair policy making and reservation decisions.

Bengaluru–Madgaon Vande Bharat to benefit entire coast: Kageri

SIRSI

BJP MP Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri has clarified that the proposed Bengaluru–Madgaon Vande Bharat Express will operate via the Padil Bypass route, connecting key coastal destinations such as Udupi, Karwar and Madgaon, and urged the public not to be misled by speculation surrounding the project.

In a statement, Kageri said the objective of the proposed service is to provide direct high-speed rail connectivity between Bengaluru and the entire Karnataka coastline. While Mangaluru remains the gateway city of the coast, the train is expected to offer significant benefits to important centres including Udupi, Kundapura, Murudeshwar, Gokarna and Karwar.

He noted that the project would improve access to major educational, religious and tourism destinations, including the renowned Kollur Mookambika Temple. According to him, connecting the entire coastal belt with the state capital through a modern train service has been a key objective of the Union government.

Kageri said he had already held discussions with Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Minister of State for Railways V. Somanna regarding the proposal and received positive assurances. He also consulted Udupi-Chikkamagaluru MP Kota Srinivas Poojary on the issue.

The MP further explained that trains travelling through the Western Ghats are often forced to operate at lower speeds due to terrain constraints. To reduce travel time and improve efficiency, he suggested that services use the Padil Bypass route instead of entering Mangaluru Central or Mangaluru Junction, where additional time is spent on operational procedures such as locomotive changes.

He expressed confidence that the proposed route would provide faster and more efficient connectivity for passengers travelling between Bengaluru and coastal Karnataka.

Demand raised for Parameshwar as Deputy CM

HUNSUR

A protest was held in Hunsur demanding that senior Congress leader Dr G Parameshwar be considered for the post of Deputy Chief Minister in the upcoming cabinet formation of Karnataka government.Supporters of Dr G Parameshwar gathered at Constitution Circle in the town and raised slogans urging the Congress leadership to give him the Deputy Chief Minister post, saying he is a senior leader and a strong voice for Dalit representation. The protest was led by members of his fan group in Hunsur taluk who held his portrait and said that he has served the party as KPCC president and Home Minister and deser ves a higher constitutional position in the new government setup.

TALUK-LITERARY-CONFERENCE

Kannada language love must be nurtured says T S Gopal

MADIKERI

T S Gopal, president of Ponnampet Taluk Kannada First Literary Conference, called for creating a strong love for Kannada among children and said the language should be taught in a simple and effective way from early education.

He was speaking while presiding over the taluk Kannada First Literary Conference held at Janata High School grounds in Hudikeri under Ponnampet taluk, where he highlighted the importance of Kannada as an ancient language with a rich history of over two thousand years.

He said Kannada should be given top priority while also encouraging students to learn other languages such as English, Hindi, Kodava and Malayalam, especially in regions like Kodagu where multiple languages are spoken in daily life.

Speakers at the conference said children should be taught Kannada pronunciation, grammar and basic literacy skills at home and in schools so that reading and writing skills improve naturally.

Former Kannada Sahitya Parishad president T P Ramesh said children should actively participate in literary events and cultural programmes and urged that restrictions on student participation in such activities should be removed.

He also said Kodagu has a rich literary and cultural history and writers of the region must be remembered for their contribution to Kannada development.

Kannada Sahitya Parishad district president M P Keshava Kamath said Kannada unity should be strengthened and literary conferences help promote local culture and inspire young minds toward literature and language growth.

Other speakers said mother tongue education helps students learn other languages more easily and stressed the need to promote Kannada in border areas and in the modern digital era while balancing global language learning needs.

Fireflies disappearing due to environmental degradation: Expert

KOTTIGEHARA

Fireflies are important indicators of ecological health, and their declining population is a warning sign that the overall environmental system of a region is deteriorating, said insect expert Dr. Avinash.

He was speaking at an interactive session and firefly observation programme titled "Stars of the Forest – Fireflies," organised by the K.P. Poornachandra Tejaswi Foundation in association with Mitra Environment and Wildlife Society at the foundation premises in Kottigehara.

Dr. Avinash said fireflies are highly sensitive insects and are increasingly threatened by excessive artificial lighting and light pollution. Climate change is also disrupting their natural life cycle, affecting breeding and survival. He noted that fireflies belong to a rare group of organisms capable of producing their own light, making them unique in the natural world.

According to him, rapid urbanisation, tourism-related activities and human interference are destroying the insects' natural habitats.

QUICK READ

Storm and rain disrupt life across MP

Bhopal

Heavy rain and strong winds disrupted normal life in several parts of Madhya Pradesh, bringing relief from the recent heatwave. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), wind speeds reached up to 94 kmph in some areas, making it one of the strongest pre-monsoon storms this season. The storm uprooted trees, damaged temporary structures, and caused power outages in rural regions. Cities such as Bhopal, Indore, and Jabalpur witnessed heavy showers and lightning. Waterlogging was reported in low-lying areas of Bhopal. Amarkantak received over 68 mm of rainfall, while Bhainsdehi recorded nearly 48 mm. Experts warned that strong winds could damage standing summer crops despite benefiting soil moisture.

Delhi woman dies, dowry harassment alleged

New Delhi

A 23-year-old woman was found dead in Delhi's Jaitpur area, with her family alleging dowry harassment by her husband and in-laws. The deceased, Roshni, was reportedly subjected to repeated demands for money and mistreatment after marriage.

Her family claimed that her husband had earlier sought money for his mother's cancer treatment, which was arranged by Roshni's father despite financial difficulties. They also alleged that Roshni faced abuse after discovering her husband's relationship with another woman. After briefly staying with relatives, she returned home following assurances from her husband. Soon after, she was found hanging in her room and was declared dead at a hospital. Police are investigating the case.

India-Aus to develop MoU on defence articles

Both countries expressed satisfaction over the expansion of military collaboration into new areas and announced plans to launch the inaugural Joint Staff Talks later this year

NEW DELHI

India and Australia have reaffirmed their commitment to deepening defence and security cooperation during the second Defence Ministers' Dialogue held in New Delhi.

Both countries expressed satisfaction over the expansion of military collaboration into new areas and announced plans to launch the inaugural Joint Staff Talks later this year.

According to a joint statement, the ministers welcomed increased information sharing between operational headquarters and stressed the importance of secure communication at strategic, operational and tactical levels.

They agreed to continue cooperation through expert exchanges and other defence initiatives.

The two sides also highlighted their strong support for the Quad framework involving India, Australia, Japan and the United States. They reaffirmed their commitment to improving maritime domain awareness and interoperability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Support was extended to the Quad Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration initiative, which will initially focus on the Indian Ocean Region.

The ministers welcomed India's implementation of the Quad Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness through the Information Fusion Centre–Indian Ocean Region in Gurugram.

They also agreed to work towards developing a Common Operational Picture across the Indo-Pacific.

Both nations appreciated growing military engagement through exercises such as Austrahind, Milan, Kakadu and Talisman Sabre.

They also discussed training cooperation, including the possible deployment of an Indian instructor to the Australian Defence College in 2028-29. The Australian Defence Minister also paid tribute at the National War Memorial.

India and Australia on Monday agreed to begin work on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the supply of defence articles and services, marking a significant step towards deeper defence industrial cooperation, including co-production and co-development of military equipment.

The decision was announced after the second India-Australia Defence Ministers' Dialogue, where Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles.

Both sides reviewed progress since their first dialogue in October 2025 and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening defence and strategic ties. They also discussed maritime security cooperation, renewing defence agreements, and expanding exchanges through the Joint Working Group on Defence Industry, Research and Material.

Plans afoot

- India and Australia will develop a defence cooperation agreement; this follows their second Defence Ministers' Dialogue.
- The countries aim to boost maritime security and expand military exercises.
- Defence industry collaboration and science technology exchanges are also planned.
- Training cooperation will see an Indian instructor at an Australian college.
- Both nations support Indo-Pacific maritime surveillance initiatives

Modi meets Myanmar Prez at Hyderabad House

NEW DELHI

The meeting between the two leaders is expected to further strengthen ties between India and Myanmar and review cooperation in several areas of mutual interest.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday met Myanmar President U Min Aung Hlaing at Hyderabad House in New Delhi during the latter's official visit to India.

President Hlaing is on a visit to India from May 30 to June 2 at the invitation of Prime Minister Modi.

This is his first visit to India in his current role as President of Myanmar. He is accompanied by a high-level delegation that includes Cabinet ministers, senior government officials and leading business representatives.

The meeting between the two leaders is expected to further strengthen ties between India and Myanmar and review cooperation in several areas of mutual interest.

Bilateral discussions are also expected to focus on regional stability, connectivity, trade, development projects and people-to-people relations.

Before meeting Prime Minister Modi, President Hlaing held separate meetings with senior Indian leaders.National Security Advisor Ajit Doval called on the Myanmar President on Sunday and discussed matters of mutual interest. The meeting was confirmed by the Ministry of External Affairs.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar also met President Hlaing on Saturday and welcomed his positive approach towards deepening relations between the two neighbouring countries.

Jaishankar expressed confidence that the President's meeting with Prime Minister Modi would help advance cooperation for peace, progress and prosperity.Prior to arriving in New Delhi, President Hlaing visited Bodh Gaya in Bihar, one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage centres in the world.

He paid respects at the Mahabodhi Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site associated with the enlightenment of Lord Buddha.

India greets Samoa, delivers healthcare support on I-Day

NEW DELHI

India extended warm greetings to Samoa on its Independence Day and highlighted its continued support for Pacific Island nations by fulfilling a key commitment made during the third Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC-III) Summit.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar conveyed his wishes to the Government and people of Samoa through a social media post on Monday. Along with the greetings, he shared an update that India had delivered a haemo-dialysis machine along with a portable Reverse Osmosis (RO) unit to Samoa, fulfilling a pledge made during the FIPIC-III Summit.

India has been steadily implementing healthcare commitments made to Pacific Island countries. In March 2025, a six-bedded container-based dialysis unit was shipped from Mundra Port to

Tarawa in Kiribati. The facility was aimed at strengthening healthcare services in the island nation.

Earlier, in November 2024, India sent six haemo-dialysis machines with portable RO units to four Pacific nations, including Samoa, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, and Nauru. Another shipment had reached Papua New Guinea in October 2024.

The FIPIC initiative was launched during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Fiji in 2014. The forum includes 14 Pacific Island countries and serves as a platform to strengthen cooperation in areas such as healthcare.

TMC expels 2 MLAs amid signature forgery row probe

KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Monday expelled two of its MLAs, Ritabrata Banerjee and Sandipan Saha, citing anti-party activities and indiscipline. The party said the decision was communicated to both legislators through email and WhatsApp and was also conveyed to the West Bengal Assembly Speaker.

The action came shortly after Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari announced that the two MLAs had submitted a written complaint to the Speaker regarding an alleged Assembly signature forgery case. Based on the complaint, the Assembly Secretariat lodged a police complaint, leading to an investigation by the state CID.

Trinamool leaders said the expelled MLAs had skipped important party meetings, made statements against the party and engaged in activities considered harmful to the organisation.

However, Sandipan Saha rejected the allegations, claiming that those who acted honestly were being punished while others were protected.

Following their expulsion, both legislators will function as independent members in the Assembly and will not be bound by the party whip during voting, including in Rajya Sabha elections.

The controversy is linked to the selection of opposition leaders in the Assembly after the recent elections. Questions were raised over signatures collected to approve party leadership positions.

'India-Aus defence partnership reaches unprecedented heights'

NEW DELHI

Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles on Monday described India-Australia defence relations as being at a "high-water mark", saying the two countries have never been more strategically aligned than they are today.

Marles made the remarks during bilateral talks with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh ahead of the second India-Australia Defence Ministers' Dialogue held in New Delhi. He said the defence partnership between the two nations has expanded considerably in recent years and is now supported by stronger institutional mechanisms and growing strategic trust.

Highlighting the progress made since the inaugural Defence Ministers' Dialogue in Canberra in October 2025, Marles said the annual dialogue has become an important platform for strengthening defence cooperation. He noted that an information-sharing arrangement signed during the first meeting has already produced positive results and improved coordination between the two countries.

The Australian minister said cooperation has increased across several areas, including military exercises, maritime security initiatives and defence industry engagement. He added that both nations are working closely to enhance collaboration and identify new opportunities in the defence sector.

Marles emphasised that the strong partnership is built on mutual trust and shared strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region. He said the current relationship represents one of the strongest phases in the history of India-Australia ties.Marles highlighted the IPL final featuring Virat Kohli, Josh Hazlewood and Tim David as a symbol of strong India-Australia ties. The dialogue will focus on defence cooperation, security, interoperability and regional stability.

Kerala HC calls for action against campus harassment

KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Monday expressed serious concern over alleged harassment of students in medical colleges and suggested the formation of a high-level committee to investigate complaints and recommend measures to safeguard students.

The observations were made by Justice A. Badharudeen while hearing an anticipatory bail plea filed by a dental college professor accused in a case linked to the recent suicide of a student. However, the court expanded its focus beyond the individual case and highlighted what it described as a wider problem in professional educational institutions.

The judge remarked that some medical colleges in Kerala were treating students harshly and that numerous complaints had been received regarding the conduct of faculty members toward students, including postgraduate students. He described the issue as serious and deserving immediate attention from the state government.

The court noted that many students hesitate to report harassment because they fear academic consequences. According to the judge, victims often remain silent rather than challenge teachers or college authorities who hold influence over their academic future.

To address the issue, the court suggested creating an independent committee that could confidentially collect feedback from students, assess the extent of harassment and recommend corrective measures. The judge also referred to a pattern in which individuals who had faced harassment later repeated similar behaviour after attaining positions of authority.

NEW MANIPUR POLICE CHIEF STRESSES SECURITY, PUBLIC TRUST

IMPHAL

Senior IPS officer Mukesh Singh took charge as the Director General of Police (DGP) of Manipur on Monday and stressed the need for stronger coordination among security agencies and public-focused policing to maintain peace and stability in the state.

After receiving a ceremonial guard of honour at the Police Headquarters in Mantripukhri, Singh held an introductory meeting with senior police officers. During the meeting, he outlined key policing priorities and highlighted the importance of professionalism, fairness, neutrality and strict adherence to the Constitution and the rule of law.

Singh said effective cooperation between law-enforcement and security agencies would play a vital role in ensuring public safety and strengthening confidence among citizens. He also stressed that police personnel must remain impartial while carrying out their duties.

An IPS officer of the AGMUT cadre, Singh succeeds Rajiv Singh as the head of the Manipur Police. His appointment comes at a crucial time as authorities continue efforts to restore normalcy in the violence-affected state. Before being transferred to Manipur, Mukesh Singh served as the Director General of Police in Ladakh from January 2026. A Civil Engineering graduate from IIT Delhi, he joined the IPS in 1996 and has held several important positions in Jammu and Kashmir, including postings in Reasi, Pulwama, Poonch and Jammu during periods of militancy and security operations.

India seeks action against Myanmar cyber scam networks

NEW DELHI

India on Monday raised concerns over the growing threat of cyber scam networks operating in Myanmar's border regions and called for stronger regional cooperation to tackle the issue. The matter was discussed during talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing at Hyderabad House in New Delhi.

Speaking after the meeting, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said India and Myanmar have been working closely to address the problem of cyber scam compounds, particularly in southeastern Myanmar. As a result of this cooperation, 2,411 Indian citizens have been brought back from such facilities over the last 18 months.

Misri said that more than 150 Indian nationals are still believed to be trapped in cyber scam centres. India is continuing discussions with Myanmar authorities to ensure their safe return.

He noted that many victims are trafficked through third countries before being taken to these scam compounds, highlighting the need for broader regional coordination.

MESSI STATUE

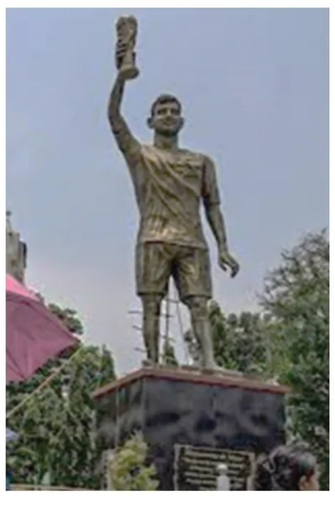
Messi statue removed over safety concerns

KOLKATA

A 70-foot-tall statue of football legend Lionel Messi has been removed from Lake Town in Kolkata after authorities found it to be structurally unstable following recent storms.

The giant statue, which had become a popular attraction for football fans, was carefully dismantled from its pedestal and transported on a truck with the help of a hydraulic crane.

Officials said the entire operation was completed without causing any damage to the structure.



Concerns about the statue's safety emerged a few days ago when local residents informed police that it appeared to sway during strong winds and storms.

Following the complaints, officials from the police and the Public Works Department conducted an inspection of the site.

According to reports, the contractor responsible for the installation identified problems with the statue's foundation bolts.

The contractor warned authorities that the structure had become unsafe and could potentially collapse if left in place, prompting immediate action.

The statue was unveiled in December last year and gained significant attention after Messi inaugurated it remotely during a special event linked to his visit to Kolkata. It quickly became a landmark in the area and attracted visitors from across the city.

Following its removal, the statue has been placed under the custody of the Public Works Department.

No official decision has yet been made regarding its future location. However, rumours suggest that it may be reinstalled at either Rabindra Sarobar or Eco Park, subject to approval from the state government.

The project was reportedly initiated by former state minister Sujit Bose.

Authorities are expected to decide on a new location for the statue after reviewing safety and structural requirements.

QUICK READ

Industry welcomes strong April industrial growth

New Delhi

Industry leaders on Monday welcomed the steady growth in India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for April despite global challenges and rising input costs linked to the West Asia crisis. Assocham President Nirmal Kumar Minda said the 16 per cent growth in capital goods reflects strong investment and rising demand in the economy. He also highlighted growth in intermediate goods (7.7 per cent), infrastructure and construction goods (7.1 per cent), and consumer durables (4.3 per cent), which are expected to support economic activity and GDP growth in the coming months.

High Court s eeks report on tiger deaths

Jabalpur

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has asked the Centre and the state government to respond within two weeks on the recent tiger deaths at Kanha National Park. A division bench directed authorities to explain the preventive and treatment measures taken to address the issue. The court acted after several tiger deaths were reported in April at the reserve. Forest officials said a tigress and her four cubs died within nine days, with initial investigations pointing to a respiratory infection. Three cubs were found dead between April 21 and April 25.

Pilgrim bus overturns after collision with truck

Haridwar

One person died and 26 others were injured after a bus carrying pilgrims overturned near Shantikunj in Haridwar on Monday. According to police, the pilgrims were returning after taking a holy dip in the Ganges when a dumper truck merging from a link road hit the double-decker bus from behind on the highway.

Yogi rejects demand for national animal status for cows

He said cows are revered as "Gomata" and share the same place in people's hearts as mothers.

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday criticised Islamic clerics who recently called for granting cows the status of a national animal.

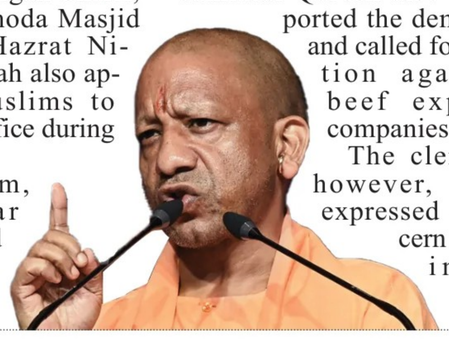
Addressing a public gathering in Bijnor, the Chief Minister said that cows are revered as "Gomata" and share the same place in people's hearts as mothers.

He stated that this bond does not require any official recognition or special status.

Yogi made the remarks while distributing land ownership certificates to more than 1,600 families, including people displaced from Pakistan and former soldiers.

He said that cows are already respected in Indian culture and traditions and do not need to be declared a national animal.

His comments came after several Muslim clerics made appeals during Bakrid, urging the government to declare the cow a national animal. According to them, such a move could help prevent cattle slaughter and strengthen respect for the animal. Religious leaders from Ajmer Dargah Sharif, Kolkata's Nakhoda Masjid and Delhi's Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah also appealed to Muslims to avoid cow sacrifice during Eid-ul-Azha.



Among them, Syed Sarwar Chishti urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to bring legislation declaring the cow a national animal and banning slaughter and beef exports.

Meanwhile, the All India Jamiatul Quresh also supported the demand and called for action against beef export companies.

The clerics, however, also expressed concern over incidents of cow vigilantism and alleged harassment of cattle traders by self-styled groups.

Yogi accused the clerics of having "double standards" and said demands to classify cows merely as animals reflected a wrong mindset. He also referred to the recent murder of Surya Pratap Chouhan in Ghaziabad, saying crimes committed under the guise of friendship would not be tolerated and strict action would continue against offenders across the state.

MP moves ahead on Uniform Civil Code plan

BHOPAL

Mohan Yadav on Monday said the state government is moving towards implementing a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and has started inviting public suggestions before taking final steps on the proposal.

The Chief Minister said the current system of different personal laws based on religion for matters like marriage and family is no longer needed. He said Madhya Pradesh is inspired by states such as Uttarakhand, Gujarat and Assam, which have already moved ahead with UCC-related measures.

Yadav said a committee headed by a former Supreme Court judge has been formed to collect views from people of all religions across districts. He added that the aim is to study public feedback and speed up the implementation process in the state.

The Chief Minister also said that a dedicated website has been launched to collect suggestions from citizens. He appealed to people to share their views on the issue so that the government can consider them in the final decision-making process.

He said Madhya Pradesh is among the most suitable states for implementing UCC and expressed confidence that the move would benefit society. He added that the government is working under the leadership of the Prime Minister for public welfare and reforms.

Uttarakhand was the first state to pass a UCC Bill in 2024, followed by Gujarat in 2026 after a detailed debate. Assam also passed its UCC Bill in May 2026, aiming to create a common legal framework for marriage, divorce, inheritance and live-in relationships across religions.

The Chief Minister also chaired a review meeting of the Women and Child Development Department, where he reviewed ongoing schemes and directed officials to ensure effective implementation. Senior officials and Minister Nirmala Bhuria attended the meeting.

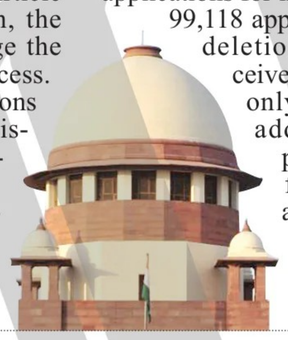
PIL seeks transparency in Bengal electoral revision

NEW DELHI

A fresh Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking greater transparency and procedural safeguards in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal.

The petition comes days after the apex court upheld the Election Commission of India's nationwide revision exercise.

Filed by Congress leader Prasenjit Bose under Article 32 of the Constitution, the plea does not challenge the legality of the SIR process. Instead, it seeks directions to the Election Commission to publish constituency-wise data on Forms 6 and 7 submitted, accepted, and rejected during the claims and objections stage.



It also asks for the public release of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) used by appellate tribunals and simplified guidelines in Bangla, Hindi, and English for voters challenging exclusion from electoral rolls.

According to the petition, more than 58 lakh voters were excluded during the enumeration phase of the revision exercise in West Bengal. During the claims and objections period, over 9.64 lakh applications for inclusion and 99,118 applications for deletion were received. However, only 1.82 lakh additions appeared in the final electoral roll published on February 28, 2026, raising concerns about transparency and accountability. The plea also questions the handling of cases marked for "logical discrepancies," including issues related to parent-child age gaps, multiple family linkages, and name mismatches.

It argues that such criteria are not mentioned in the SIR notifications or the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

The petition further seeks disclosure of an SOP prepared by a committee of former judges for the functioning of 19 appellate tribunals in the state.

It claims that the lack of publicly available procedures creates confusion for voters, especially poor and rural citizens, and urges judicial intervention to protect voters' rights and ensure a fair revision process.

Mamata condemns attacks on TMC leaders

KOLKATA

Mamata Banerjee on Monday strongly condemned the alleged attacks on Trinamool Congress MPs Abhishek Banerjee and Kalyan Banerjee, describing the incidents as shocking and authoritarian. She also alleged that hospitals were pressured not to provide treatment to injured party leaders.

In a video statement, Mamata questioned the handling of the incidents and claimed that doctors had been called for treatment but hospitals were allegedly instructed not to admit or treat the injured. She said such actions reflected a breakdown of democratic values and accused political opponents of trying to weaken her party through intimidation.

The TMC chief asserted that these incidents would only strengthen the party. Rejecting claims that party leaders were not supporting workers, she said misinformation was being spread and alleged that lawlessness was increasing in the state.

Her remarks came after Abhishek Banerjee alleged that he was attacked with bricks, stones and eggs while visiting families affected by post-poll violence in South 24 Parganas district. He suffered an eye injury and claimed the attack was sponsored by BJP supporters. He also accused the police of failing to provide adequate security.

In a separate incident, Kalyan Banerjee alleged that he was attacked near a police station in Hooghly district while going to submit a memorandum on post-poll violence. Calling it an attempt to murder, he blamed BJP workers for the assault.

Police have arrested five people in connection with the alleged attack on Abhishek Banerjee. Mamata later met Kalyan Banerjee and reviewed the situation following the incident.

Mamata Banerjee alleged that two private hospitals in Kolkata faced external pressure while treating Abhishek Banerjee after he was reportedly injured during an attack in Sonarpur.

Abhishek was first taken to Apollo Hospital and later shifted to Belle Vue Clinic. Doctors at both hospitals reportedly found no serious injuries requiring admission, apart from minor bruises.

Mamata claimed treatment was affected by outside influence and said hospital authorities had conveyed similar concerns.

TN POLITICS NOW A TWO-PARTY CONTEST: VIJAY

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI

TTamil Nadu Chief Minister and Vijay on Monday declared that the state's political future is now a direct contest between the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, asserting that there is "no role or space" for any other party in between.

Addressing a public rally in Tiruchirappalli, Vijay said the political battle in Tamil Nadu would now be between TVK and the DMK. His remarks were widely seen as a message to the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, which has traditionally been one of the two major political forces in the state.

Thanking voters for supporting TVK in its first Assembly election, Vijay said the party had achieved an unprecedented result. Referring to comparisons with former Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran, he said he was not comparing himself with the late leader but would work following the ideals of MGR, Anna and Periyar. Vijay also took a swipe at political opponents, saying those who claimed they would remain silent for six months after the election could not stay silent even for six days. Speaking about his victory, he said people had rejected the traditional DMK-AIADMK political arrangement and chosen TVK for change.

GUJ POLICE BUST RS 2,289 CR CYBER FRAUD

GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat Police has uncovered cyber fraud transactions worth Rs 2,289 crore through a month-long crackdown on mule bank account networks used by cybercriminals to transfer and hide illegal funds.

The operation, named "Operation Mule Hunt 1.0," was carried out from December 1 to December 31, 2025, under the Gujarat Police Cyber Centre of Excellence.

The drive involved district police units, cybercrime cells and crime branches across the state. Authorities registered 565 FIRs, arrested 638 people and initiated legal action involving 913 suspected mule accounts. Investigators linked 4,052 cybercrime cases to these networks, including 491 cases from Gujarat.

Police said mule accounts are often used by cybercriminals to move fraud proceeds through multiple transactions, making it difficult to trace and recover money. The operation relied on intelligence from the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal, Samanvay platform and cybercrime helpline 1930.

Bengal Cabinet expanded with 35 BJP ministers

KOLKATA

The West Bengal government on Monday expanded its Council of Ministers, with 35 BJP legislators taking oath at a ceremony held at Lok Bhavan in Kolkata.

The move came a little over three weeks after Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari assumed office following the party's Assembly election victory.

Thirteen legislators were inducted as Cabinet Ministers. They included Deepak Barman, Tapas Roy, Dr Shankar Ghosh, Manoj Kumar Oraon, Arjun Singh, Gouri Shankar Ghosh, Swapan Dasgupta, Jagannath Chattopadhyay, Kalyan Chakraborty, Ajay Poddar, Dr Saradwat Mukherjee, Dudh Kumar Mondal and Anup Kumar Das. The government has not yet announced their portfolios.

With the latest expansion, the strength of the state cabinet has increased to 19 members, including the Chief Minister. Adhikari had taken oath on May 9 along with five ministers — Agnimitra Paul, Dilip Ghosh, Nisith Pramanik, Ashok Kirtaniya and Khudiram Tudu.

Three BJP legislators were also sworn in as Ministers of State with Independent Charge. They are Indranil Khan, Malati Rava Roy and Rajesh Mamahato.

Nineteen other MLAs joined the government as Ministers of State.

The new ministers are Joel Murmu, Hare Krishna Bera, Anandamay Barman, Ashok Dinda, Nadiar Chand Bauri, Vishal Lama, Shantanu Pramanik, Moumita Biswas Mishra, Umesh Ray, Purnima Chakravarty, Kaushik Chowdhury, Bhaskar Bhattacharya, Dibakar Gharami, Amiya Kisku, Kalita Majhi, Gargi Das Ghosh, Biraj Biswas, Dipankar Jana and Sumana Sarkar.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, CHITRADURGA
No.EE:PWD:CTA:AE-3:Tender-11:2026-27 Dated:- 01.06.2026
SHORTTERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION
Tenders are invited from registered Contractors in KPWD for the following work through KPPP Portal as per standard tender documents rules.
Name of work:- One cover System :- Head of Account 4059-80-051-0-60-132 CMIDP Works:- (1) Improvements to Road from Abradasikatte to Shivapura Road in Holalkere Taluk (Improvements to Road from Abradasikatte Connecting Shivapura Main Road from Km 0.00 to 1.00 in Holalkere Taluk) (W.I. 35516)/ call-2
Estimate Cost Rs. in Lakhs 50.00
Tender dates are as mentioned below: Late Date & time for Tender Queries/ Clarifications 06-06-2026 Time: 17.30
Last Date & time for receipt of tenders 08-06-2026 Time: 16.00
Date & time for opening of Financial Bid 09-06-2026 Time: 16.15
Further details can be obtained from this office and H.P. Company helpline Numbers 91 9240214000 and 91 9240214001.
DIPR/CTA/KSMCA/ 137/2026-27
Sd/- Executive Engineer PWD, Chitradurga.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
BENGALURU URBAN ZILLA PANCHAYATH
Olo Executive Engineer,
Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, First Floor,
Zilla Panchayat Building, S. Kariyappa Road,
Banashankari (Near Banashankari Temple), Bengaluru 560070.
Phone No: 080-26716046 Website: http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in
No.EE/PRED/BNG(U)/TND/AE-2/15/2026-27/480 Dated:01.06.2026
KPPP Tender Notice (Two Cover System)
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
Tenders are invited through KPPP Portal by the Executive Engineer, P.R.E.D. Bangalore Urban, For **5054/2023-24 Grants** Works. The work details can obtained from the KPPP Web Site The Tender Documents can be obtained and submitted on or before **Dated:09.06.2026 upto 4.00 pm.** Further details can be obtained from web site at http://www.KPPP.karnataka.gov.in or contact this office during office working hours.
Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Panchayath Raj Engineering Division,
Bangalore Urban Dist, Bangalore.
DIPR/CP/918/Shirdi Sai/2026-27

YOGA OUTREACH

Army promotes yoga across Northeast ahead of IDY

AGARTALA

As part of preparations for the 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY) on June 21, the Indian Army, in partnership with civil authorities, organised yoga sessions across several Northeastern states to promote physical fitness, mental wellness and community participation.

According to defence officials, the Spearhead Division under the Spear Corps conducted a special yoga session for soldiers on the banks of Pasang Sonam Lake in Arunachal Pradesh's Shi-Yomi district. Situated at an altitude of nearly 9,000 feet, the location provided a peaceful setting for troops stationed in forward areas to practise yoga postures, breathing exercises and meditation.

Defence spokesman Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said the month-long activities leading up to International Yoga Day aim to encourage a healthy lifestyle and strengthen mental resilience among soldiers serving in remote and challenging terrains. He noted that yoga helps improve flexibility, concentration, stress management and overall well-being while also fostering teamwork and motivation among troops.

The Army said the event reflected its continued focus on holistic health, discipline and operational readiness. It also highlighted the commitment of personnel deployed in frontier regions to participate in national initiatives.

In Tripura, the Red Shield Division under the Spear Corps, in collaboration with the civil administration, organised a yoga programme at the historic Ujjayanta Palace in Agartala. Army personnel participated enthusiastically in the event, which focused on promoting physical fitness, mental well-being and healthy living through yoga.

Held at Ujjayanta Palace, the yoga session combined asanas, pranayama and meditation, promoting health and harmony.

QUICK READ

B'desh bank appointment triggers violent clashes

Dhaka

Violence erupted outside Islami Bank PLC in Bangladesh after the appointment of former central bank Deputy Governor Khurshed Alam as the bank's new chairman. Employees opposed the decision, accusing him of links to alleged financial irregularities during the previous government. Protesters gathered outside the bank's headquarters, where police used batons, tear gas, sound grenades, and water cannons to disperse them. Several people were injured in the clashes. Tensions remain high as protesters and police continue their standoff in the area.

China increases patrols Near Taiwan islands

Taipei

China has sharply increased coast guard patrols near Taiwan's Pratas Islands, according to Taiwan's Coast Guard Administration. Officials said Chinese vessels now conduct more than 30 patrols a year, compared to occasional transits in the past. Taiwan believes the move is part of Beijing's "gray zone" strategy aimed at testing its response capabilities. Chinese ships have reportedly operated near restricted waters, sometimes disabling tracking systems. Taiwan has responded by deploying patrol vessels, issuing warnings, and escorting Chinese ships away from sensitive areas. Tensions in the region remain high.

Teachers' boycott halts Karachi varsity exams

Karachi

A teachers' boycott at Karachi University has disrupted semester examinations for nearly 50,000 students, with the protest entering its fourth week. Faculty members are demanding payment of pending dues and an inquiry into the university's financial management.

IRAN KEEN ON REACHING FRESH AGREEMENT: TRUMP

His remarks came amid ongoing tensions and diplomatic efforts to end the conflict that has continued for the past three months.

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Monday said that Iran is keen to reach a deal with the United States and expressed confidence that any agreement would benefit both Washington and its allies.

His remarks came amid ongoing tensions and diplomatic efforts to end the conflict that has continued for the past three months.

Posting on his social media platform, Trump said Iran "really wants to make a deal" and added that the outcome would be positive for the United States and countries aligned with it. His comments were made shortly after fresh military developments between the two sides.

The statement followed reports that the US military carried out strikes on Iranian military sites over the weekend. In response, Iran's Revolutionary Guards claimed responsibility for targeting a US military base. The exchanges marked the latest round of hostilities as negotiations continue alongside military actions.

Trump also spoke about the challenges of conducting negotiations while facing constant political criticism. He said that commentators and political opponents continue to offer conflicting advice, with some urging faster action, others calling for slower progress, and some demanding military action while others oppose it.

According to Trump, such public pressure makes negotiations more difficult. He suggested that outside commentary often complicates diplomatic efforts and can interfere

with decision-making during sensitive discussions.

Despite the tensions and criticism, Trump remained optimistic about the outcome. He urged people to remain calm and expressed confidence that the situation would eventually be resolved successfully.

Last week, Trump had indicated that he would soon make a decision regarding a proposed agreement aimed at extending the ceasefire with Iran. His latest comments have renewed attention on diplomatic efforts as both countries continue to exchange military actions while discussions over a possible deal remain ongoing.

Israel approves renewed trikes on Beirut

Israel cites Hezbollah ceasefire violations for the same; while diplomatic efforts continue to prevent a wider regional conflict.

TEL AVIV

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Israel Katz have directed the Israeli military to carry out strikes on what they described as Hezbollah terror targets in Beirut.

The decision comes after Israel accused Hezbollah of repeatedly violating the ceasefire in Lebanon and launching attacks against Israeli cities and civilians.

According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office, the planned strikes will focus on locations in Beirut's Dahia district, an area known as a Hezbollah stronghold. Israeli authorities said the action was necessary due to continued attacks and security threats originating from Lebanon.

The announcement followed reports that the United States had indicated it would not expect Israel to tolerate ongoing attacks against its civilian population. Israeli media reported that senior Israeli officials had recently consulted Washington regarding the possibility of expanding military operations in Beirut amid continued cross-border tensions.A US official reportedly stated that the quickest way to reduce tensions and protect civilians on both sides would be for Hezbollah to immediately stop its attacks. The official also said that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio had proposed a framework aimed at reducing hostilities between Israel and Lebanon.

Under the reported proposal, Hezbollah would halt attacks on Israel, while the Israeli military would avoid further escalation in Beirut. The framework is intended to create conditions for a gradual reduction in violence and a broader ceasefire.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu said Israeli forces have killed thousands of Hezbollah fighters since the war began. He described the recent capture of Beaufort as a major strategic achievement and said Israel was taking action across multiple fronts, including Lebanon, Gaza and Syria. Regional tensions remain high as military operations and diplomatic efforts continue simultaneously.

US shifts hampering ongoing negotiation process: Iran

TEHRAN

Iran has accused the United States of repeatedly changing its positions during ongoing discussions, making it more difficult to achieve progress in negotiations. Speaking at a weekly press conference, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said exchanges between Tehran and Washington are taking place in an atmosphere of deep mistrust and suspicion.

Baghaei stated that diplomacy does not depend on trust alone, but frequent shifts in US positions and contradictory statements by American officials have complicated efforts to move the process forward. According to him, such changes disrupt negotiations and extend the time needed to reach an understanding.

The Iranian spokesperson also accused Israel of attempting to undermine diplomatic efforts through its military actions in Lebanon. He said the recent escalation in Lebanon was aimed at preventing diplomatic initiatives from producing positive results and improving the regional situation.Baghaei rejected reports suggesting that nuclear-related matters had become part of the current discussions. He reiterated that Iran's primary focus remains ending the ongoing conflict and reducing tensions in the region. He further stated that any agreement between Iran and the United States should include a ceasefire in Lebanon, describing it as an important part of broader peace efforts.

He also accused Israel and the United States of violating ceasefire arrangements and said Iran's armed forces had responded to what Tehran viewed as American aggression. According to Baghaei, Iran's actions were taken in response to developments that it considered violations of previous understandings.

Trump said Iran wants a deal with the US, criticised public commentary on talks, and urged patience as negotiations continue.

5 dead in S. Korea factory explosion

SEOUL

Five people were killed and two others injured after an explosion at a factory operated by Hanwha Aerospace in the central South Korean city of Daejeon on Monday.

The explosion occurred at around 10:59 a.m. while workers were reportedly carrying out cleaning work involving explosive materials. Fire authorities received around 30 emergency calls reporting a loud blast and thick smoke rising from the facility.Of the two survivors, one suffered severe burns across the body, while the other sustained minor injuries. Rescue and firefighting teams were immediately deployed to the site.

'We thank India': Africa CDC on emergency Ebola aid

ETHIOPIA

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has welcomed emergency medical assistance provided by India to support efforts against the ongoing Bundibugyo Ebola outbreak in the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In a statement shared on social media, Africa CDC said the supplies included diagnostics, therapeutics and other essential medical materials needed for the Ebola response.

The aid was delivered through Africa CDC's Eastern Regional Coordinating Centre in Uganda and will be used to strengthen response operations in affected areas of eastern DRC.

The agency said the assistance would help contain the outbreak and support communities facing the health emergency. It also thanked the Government and people of India for showing solidarity with African nations during the crisis.Africa CDC, the public health agency of the African Union, plays a major role in coordinating disease prevention and emergency response activities across the continent.

India had earlier confirmed the dispatch of its first tranche of emergency medical supplies to Africa. Speaking during a weekly media briefing, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the supplies had been handed over by India's High Commissioner in Uganda.

According to Africa CDC, the donated materials include diagnostic kits, medicines, infection prevention equipment and case management support. These supplies are expected to be deployed soon in affected communities.

India has also indicated that it remains in close contact with African health authorities and is prepared to provide additional medical and logistical assistance if required.

The support highlights growing cooperation between India and African countries in addressing public health emergencies and strengthening healthcare.

Mob violence claims 32 lives across B'desh

DHAKA

At least 32 people were killed in incidents of mob violence across Bangladesh in May, while 53 unidentified bodies were recovered from different parts of the country, according to a report released by the Dhaka-based Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation.

The rights group said 71 people were seriously injured in 69 separate incidents during the month, marking an increase from April, when 21 deaths and 49 injuries were recorded. The organisation expressed concern over what it described as a growing tendency among people to take the law into their own hands.

According to the report, 14 of the victims were killed over allegations of theft, while four died following altercations. Two deaths each were linked to allegations of robbery and rape or sexual assault. The report also noted that 35 injured individuals were later handed over to police, and some incidents involved attacks on law enforcement personnel.

The recovery of 53 unidentified bodies from rivers, roadsides, railway tracks and agricultural fields was also highlighted as a major concern. The organisation said the repeated discovery of unidentified bodies raises questions about criminal investigations and unresolved cases.

Uyghur groups warn of rising Chinese pressure campaigns

MUNICH

The World Uyghur Congress has raised fresh concerns over what it describes as growing Chinese influence operations and continued repression of Uyghurs in East Turkistan, according to its latest weekly briefing.

The report highlighted criticism from 20 Uyghur organisations and Turkish support groups regarding a recent visit by Chinese Consul General Wei Xiaodong to a municipality in Istanbul. The groups alleged that the visit promoted Beijing's narrative on East Turkistan and reflected efforts to exert pressure on the Uyghur diaspora living in Turkiye. They urged Turkish authorities to closely monitor Chinese diplomatic activities.

The briefing also warned of an increase in phishing attacks, impersonation attempts and disinformation campaigns targeting Uyghur activists and organisations ahead of the International Uyghur Forum 2026. The World Uyghur Congress and the Uyghur Center for Democracy and Human Rights said such activities appear aimed at intimidating activists and disrupting international advocacy efforts.

Marking Eid al-Adha, the organisation extended greetings to Muslims worldwide while drawing attention to Uyghurs separated from their families and homeland. It stated that many Uyghurs in East Turkistan remain unable to freely practise their religious and cultural traditions and called for international solidarity.

The report further noted a meeting on May 28 between Uyghur advocacy leaders and officials from the United States Department of State. Discussions focused on allegations of ongoing human rights abuses and concerns about China's efforts to influence and monitor Uyghur communities abroad.

The briefing also referred to a recent Financial Times investigation, which reported that Chinese policies have expanded beyond internment camps to include surveillance, prisons, forced labour, cultural assimilation and restrictions on language and identity. Researchers warned these measures threaten Uyghur culture, while China maintains that its policies.

HEALTH CRISIS

Rising kidney disease cases strain Jhelum valley hospitals

Jhelum Valley

Residents of Jhelum Valley in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir have raised serious concerns over poor healthcare facilities as rising cases of kidney disease continue to put pressure on the region's already limited medical infrastructure. Locals say that despite having a District Headquarters Hospital and a Basic Health Unit in Chinari, access to advanced treatment remains inadequate.

According to residents, patients suffering from serious illnesses are often referred to other cities because local hospitals lack the facilities and specialised services needed for proper treatment. At the same time, the number of people affected by diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and kidney-related disorders has been steadily increasing, creating additional pressure on healthcare services.

Local resident Masood Mir Kayani said that healthcare institutions exist in the area, but many important services are unavailable. He noted that accident victims and critically ill patients are frequently sent

elsewhere due to a shortage of treatment options.

The growing number of kidney patients has emerged as a major concern. Six dialysis machines were reportedly donated to the District Headquarters Hospital, but only three are currently operational. Residents claim that insufficient space in the dialysis centre has prevented the installation of the remaining machines.

As a result, many patients must travel around 45 kilometres from Chinari to Muzaffarabad to receive dialysis treatment. Residents say this journey creates both financial and physical hardships for people already dealing with serious medical conditions.

Residents have raised concerns over infection risks due to limited dialysis machines being shared by Hepatitis C patients. They urged authorities to improve healthcare infrastructure, warning that delays could worsen the region's medical crisis.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, K U Arunamshu alias Arunamshu K U alias Arunamshu Kochuveetil Udayakumar S/o Udayakumar Sivanandan R/o Flat No 1533, Tower 1, Wing 5, DSR Parkway Mother Teresa Road Bhoganahalli Carmelram Carmelaram Bengaluru Karnataka – 560035, have changed my name to Arunamshu Kochuveetil Udayakumar.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, NARASIMHA SWAMY N S/o NARASIMHAMURTHY CHIKKANAYAKANA, R/o 1103, Komarla Brigade Residency, Uttarahalli Main Road, Opp Shani Mahatma Temple, Chikkalsandra, Bangalore South, Subramanyapura, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560061, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NARASIMHASWAMY NARASIMHAMURTHY.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The original Hakku Pathra document **No. LNDCR:/20/02-03** relating to an house site granted under Ashrya Yojana scheme, relating to property comprised in **Survey No.67** of Ablamogaru village standing in the name of **Smt. Chandravathi D/o Devaki** has been lost at the midway of Thokkotu - Amblamogaru road. If anyone finds the aforesaid document, may kindly deliver the same to the below mentioned

Address: Narayana Maniyani S, Advocate, 109 City plaza, Shedigudda, Kodialbail, Mangaluru-575003, Ph-9448622613

Sd/-NARAYANA MANIYANI S.

Date: 01.06.2026

Place: Mangaluru Kodialbail, Mangaluru

Zee secures FIFA WC 2026 rights, ending uncertainty in India

Fans finally get broadcaster as tournament kickoff draws increasingly closer

NEW DELHI

Football fans in India can finally breathe easy after Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited secured the broadcasting rights for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, ending months of uncertainty over where the sport's biggest event would be televised and streamed in the country.

The announcement comes less than two weeks before the start of the expanded World Cup, bringing relief to millions of Indian football enthusiasts who had been anxiously awaiting confirmation of a broadcaster.

The prolonged delay stemmed from negotiations over the value of the media rights package. Reports suggested that FIFA had initially sought around $100 million for the Indian rights before reducing its expectations to approximately $35 million. However, leading broadcasters in India were reportedly willing to bid only around $20 million, creating a stalemate that persisted for months.

The uncertainty deepened last week when Prasar Bharati, considered one of the frontrunners for the rights, withdrew from the formal bidding process. The public broadcaster had explored the possibility of airing matches through DD Sports but ultimately chose not to proceed.

India and China were among the few major markets where broadcast arrangements for the tournament remained unresolved until recently. China's state broadcaster CCTV eventually secured rights for the 2026 and 2030 editions, while India's negotiations continued until Zee stepped in to finalise an agreement with FIFA.

Industry observers believe the timing of matches played a major role in the hesitation shown by broadcasters. Many of the marquee fixtures are scheduled to begin at 12.30 am IST or 3.30 am IST, with some kicking off at 6.30 am, limiting advertising and monetisation opportunities compared to prime-time sporting events.

Despite those concerns, the popularity of the World Cup in India remains substantial. The 2022 tournament in Qatar attracted massive engagement, with more than 110 million viewers consuming content digitally. India also accounted for nearly three per cent of the tournament's global linear television audience.

Ochoa set for historic sixth WC as Mexico announce squad

Veteran goalkeeper headlines balanced squad blending experience with emerging talent

MEXICO CITY

Veteran goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa is poised to make history after being named in Mexico's squad for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, becoming the first Mexican player to feature in six editions of football's biggest tournament.

The 40-year-old shot-stopper was included in coach Javier Aguirre's 26-man squad announced, completing a remarkable journey that began with his World Cup debut in Germany in 2006.

Although Ochoa has played a reduced role for the national team in recent years, Aguirre opted to retain the experienced goalkeeper as part of a squad that combines seasoned campaigners with a new generation of talent ahead of the tournament, which Mexico will co-host alongside the United States and Canada.

Ochoa's selection places him in elite company among football's most enduring international performers and underlines his continued importance within the Mexican setup despite fierce competition for places.

Mexico's squad also features experienced leaders such as captain Edson Alvarez and striker Raul Jimenez, both expected to play key roles during the tournament.

Alongside the veterans are several promising youngsters. Midfielder Gilberto Mora, aged just 17, is set to become the youngest player ever to represent Mexico at a World Cup. Young talents Obed Vargas and Brian Gutierrez have also earned places after impressive performances.

Aguirre has additionally included naturalised players Alvaro Fidalgo and Julian Quinones, who have become regular members of the national team in recent years.

The tournament carries special significance for Mexico, which last hosted the World Cup in 1986 and reached the quarter-finals on home soil. Aguirre, meanwhile, will guide the national team at a World Cup for the third time, having previously led Mexico in 2002 and 2010.

Mexico will conclude their preparations with a friendly against Serbia national football team before opening the World Cup against South Africa national football team at the iconic Estadio Azteca on June 11, where Ochoa could begin another historic chapter in an extraordinary international career.

Referees instructed to ensure faster play and stricter discipline throughout

FIFA targets time-wasting, faster play at World Cup

WASHINGTON

With the FIFA World Cup 2026 less than two weeks away, FIFA has instructed referees to place greater emphasis on maintaining match tempo and reducing time-wasting, while also clarifying several disciplinary and VAR-related protocols for the tournament.

FIFA's chief refereeing officer Pierluigi Collina said officials would focus on minimising disruptions and ensuring that matches flow more smoothly.

"We are continuing on trying to achieve an objective, which is to eliminate from matches — as much as possible — the disruption of the tempo of the match," Collina said.

One of the most significant measures involves stricter enforcement of restart timings. Referees will be permitted to use a visible five-second countdown for goal kicks and throw-ins. If a team fails to restart play before the countdown expires, possession will be awarded to the opposition. A delayed goal kick will result in a corner kick, while a delayed throw-in will be handed to the opposing side.

Substituted players will also be required to leave the field within 10 seconds unless exceptional circumstances such as injury or security concerns apply.

FIFA has also reinforced disciplinary guidelines. Players who leave the field in protest after becoming angered by an official's decision risk receiving a red card. Another notable directive concerns players who cover their mouths while engaging in confrontational exchanges with opponents.

According to FIFA, players who use a hand, arm or shirt to conceal their mouths during hostile interactions may be sent off. However, ordinary conversations that are not confrontational will not be punished simply because a player shields their mouth from view.

The governing body has additionally clarified several aspects of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) protocol. VAR can now intervene in cases involving clearly incorrect second yellow cards that lead to red cards, mistaken identity incidents and wrongly awarded corner kicks.

Officials may also review offences committed by an attacking team before the ball comes into play from a corner kick or free kick if those incidents directly influence goals, penalties or disciplinary sanctions. Despite the push for faster football, matches could still feature longer interruptions, with FIFA confirming that three-minute water breaks will be available midway through each half throughout the tournament.

Indian stars suffer across the board in tough Norway Chess round

OSLO

It was a disappointing day for India's leading chess players as all four representatives suffered setbacks in the sixth round of the prestigious Norway Chess at Deichman Bjørvika. The Open section witnessed all three classical games producing decisive results, with Indian stars D Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa both ending on the losing side.

World champion Gukesh was outplayed by Germany's Vincent Keymer, who finally secured his first victory of the tournament after several near misses in earlier rounds. Keymer handled the game confidently and never appeared under serious pressure.

"It's nice to finally win a game after so many failed chances," Keymer said after defeating the Indian world champion. "I don't think I was ever worse."

Praggnanandhaa, meanwhile, adopted an ambitious and aggressive approach against experienced American grandmaster Wesley So. However, the strategy backfired as So capitalised on inaccuracies and converted his advantage into a full point.

Elsewhere, world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen gained revenge against French grandmaster Alireza Firouzja. Carlsen had lost to Firouzja in the opening round but turned the tables in their return encounter to strengthen his position in the standings.

"He surprised me a little in the opening, but I got a pleasant position and it was relatively easy to play," Carlsen said after the win.

The women's section brought little relief for India. Veteran grandmaster Koneru Humpy drew her classical game against Kazakhstan's Bibisara Assaubayeva in just 15 moves. However, Assaubayeva prevailed in the Armageddon tiebreak to claim the extra point and move back to the top of the leaderboard.

French authorities report widespread unrest following PSG's Champions League triumph

Nearly 900 arrested as PSG title celebrations descend into violence

PARIS

French authorities said on Monday nearly 900 people were arrested across the country after celebrations following Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League triumph were marred by riots, looting and violent clashes with police.

The unrest erupted over the weekend after PSG secured their second consecutive Champions League title, sparking jubilant scenes among supporters but also triggering widespread disorder in Paris and several other cities.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said on Monday that authorities had made more than 890 arrests, a significant increase compared to similar incidents last year.

"We've had more than 890 arrests. In total, that's 45 per cent more than last year," Nunez told France Inter radio.

He added that nearly 180 law enforcement officers were injured while dealing with the disturbances, highlighting the scale of the security challenge faced by authorities during the celebrations.

What began as scenes of jubilation quickly descended into chaos in several locations. Police reported clashes with groups of youths, while numerous vehicles were set ablaze and shops were vandalised or looted. Emergency services were deployed throughout the night to contain the unrest and restore order.

The violence also resulted in casualties. Authorities confirmed that one man died while riding his motorcycle around Paris's ring road during the celebrations. Several stabbing incidents and other attacks were also reported, although officials have yet to provide a full assessment of the number of injured civilians.

On Sunday evening, French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed the PSG squad to the Élysée Palace to congratulate them on their historic achievement. While praising the club's success, Macron strongly condemned the violence that accompanied the celebrations.

"PSG are an immense pride for France," Macron said, before denouncing what he described as "unspeakable" acts committed during the festivities.

"Enough. We are fed up," he declared.

"This is not football, this is not sport, this is not what we love," the French president added.

Gokulam edge Calicut in five-goal thriller to reclaim KPL crown

THRISSUR

Gokulam Kerala FC regained the Kerala Premier League title after a five-year wait, defeating fellow Kozhikode side Calicut FC 3-2 in a rain-soaked final at the Corporation Stadium.

Amid heavy showers that lashed the venue, Gokulam produced a dominant display and survived a late fightback from Calicut to lift the trophy for the first time since 2021.

The final sprang to life almost immediately as Mohamed Bilal struck twice within the opening five minutes to leave Calicut stunned. The forward opened the scoring in the second minute after being set up by Muhammed Sinan, who surged down the left flank before delivering a precise pass into the box.

Just three minutes later, Bilal doubled Gokulam's advantage. A long ball from Aman Gaikwad split the Calicut defence, allowing the striker to finish confidently and put his side firmly in control.

Calicut struggled to recover from the early setback but gradually found their rhythm. Their efforts were rewarded eight minutes before halftime when Ameen pulled a goal back. The strike, his third in two matches, revived hopes of a comeback and ensured the contest remained alive heading into the second half.

However, Gokulam restored their two-goal cushion in the 72nd minute through Muhammed Sinan, who capped an impressive performance with a well-taken goal to make it 3-1.

The insurance goal proved crucial as Calicut mounted one final push in stoppage time. Substitute Rifhath Ramzan headed home from a corner kick in the fourth minute of added time to reduce the deficit, but there was insufficient time left to force extra time.

While the final scoreline suggested a close encounter, Gokulam were the better side for much of the evening and deservedly emerged champions. Their early attacking intent and composure under pressure ensured that Calicut were chasing the game throughout the contest.

The triumph provides a significant boost for Gokulam after a disappointing campaign in the national league and marks a return to the top of Kerala football. For Calicut, despite a spirited fightback, the wait for a maiden Kerala Premier League title continues after falling just short in an entertaining final.

Teen sensation Fonseca stuns Ruud to reach maiden French Open quarterfinal

PARIS

Brazilian prodigy Joao Fonseca continued his remarkable breakthrough campaign at the French Open by defeating two-time runner-up Casper Ruud to reach the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam tournament for the first time in his career.

The 19-year-old prevailed 7-5, 7-6(8), 5-7, 6-2 in a gripping fourth-round contest on Court Philippe-Chatrier, further strengthening his credentials as one of the tournament's most exciting contenders.

Fonseca arrived at the match brimming with confidence after producing one of the shocks of the championship by recovering from two sets down to eliminate Novak Djokovic in the previous round. Against Ruud, a clay-court specialist and former finalist at Roland Garros, the Brazilian once again displayed maturity beyond his years.

"It was tough. Casper plays good here. He's a very experienced guy and knows how to play on this amazing court," Fonseca said after the match.

"I played really well in the important moments in the first and second sets. I'm very happy because of that."

The opening stages were closely contested, but Fonseca struck at the perfect moment, breaking Ruud in the final game of the first set to take the lead. The second set developed into a high-quality battle of power and precision, with both players exchanging breaks before the Brazilian edged a dramatic tiebreak after saving three set points.

The performance delighted Brazilian tennis icon Gustavo Kuerten, a three-time French Open champion who watched from the stands.

"He's an idol for our sport and country," Fonseca said of Kuerten. "It's a pleasure to have him here and a pleasure to beat a tough opponent in front of him."

Ruud responded by claiming the third set to keep his hopes alive, but Fonseca quickly regained control.

Zero- duty access spark India-Oman trade revolution

India's landmark CEPA with Oman takes effect, eliminating tariffs on 98% of exports to boost trade past $6 billion.

NEW DELHI

India's merchandise exports to Oman are set to skyrocket by 50% over the next three years, thanks to a landmark trade deal that officially took effect.

The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) aims to push Indian exports from $4.06 billion past the $6 billion mark, with a long-term goal of $10 billion.

Under this pact, Oman has removed import duties on over 98 percent of its tariff lines. This zero-duty access covers nearly all of India's exports, giving a massive boost to major labor-intensive sectors like textiles, gems and jewelry, leather, engineering products, and pharmaceuticals.

In return, India is offering duty cuts on roughly 77 percent of its imports from Oman. However, India has strictly kept sensitive items - including dairy, tea, coffee, tobacco, gold bullion, and footwear, in an exclusion list to protect local industries.

Beyond goods, the service sector is a huge winner. Oman has opened doors for Indian professionals in IT, education, healthcare, and architecture. Notably, Oman has increased the quota for corporate transfers from 20 percent to 50 percent and extended the stay for contractual service providers from 90 days to up to four years.

Following recent trade deals with the UK and New Zealand, this pact with Oman is part of India's aggressive strategy to diversify its trade amidst shifting global economics.

The Finance Ministry finalized the duty concessions on Sunday, paving the way for a highly profitable, modern economic partnership between the two nations.

GST collections hit 2 lakh crore

NEW DELHI

India's gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections ma intained a powerful streak, rising 3.2 percent year-on-year to nearly 2 lakh crore rupees in May.

This strong performance follows April's historic, record-shattering revenue collection, showing robust economic resilience despite ongoing global geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

According to latest government data, gross GST revenue reached an impressive 1,94,184 crore rupees last mon th, compared to 1,88,172 crore rupees during the exact same period last year. Meanwhile, net GST collections which account for processed refunds climbed 3.3 percent to hit 1,66,904 crore rupees. Total tax refunds issued to businesses during May also saw a 2.6 percent annual increase, totaling 27,281 crore rupees.

A deep dive into the numbers reveals that a massive surge in international trade drove the gains. Gross revenue from imports jumped significantly by 19.1 percent to 59,654 crore rupees, reflecting highly active import markets. Conversely, gross domestic GST revenue dipped slightly by 2.6 percent to 1,34,530 crore rupees.

Economists note that when adjusting for a massive, one-time telecom spectrum payment made in May last year, the actual adjusted gross GST growth stands at a healthy 9 percent. For the first two months of the current financial year, India's total gross GST collections have already surged 6.2 percent to 4.37 lakh crore rupees.

QUICK READ

Maruti Suzuki scores record high monthly sales

CH NEWS, NEW DELHI India's largest carmaker, Maruti Suzuki, achieved a historic milestone by selling a record 2,42,688 vehicles in May. This spectacular performance marks a massive 34.8% jump compared to the same month last year, beating the company's previous sales record set just this April. The huge growth was heavily driven by a booming domestic demand for passenger vans and utility vehicles like the Brezza and Ertiga. Additionally, international exports surged past 41,000 units. This phenomenal sales boom com es just as Maruti impleme nts a planned price hike of up to 30,000 due to rising raw material costs.

Inox Wind shares tumble after profit drops

CH NEWS, MUMBAI Shares of Inox Wind plummeted over 8% after the green energy company reported a steep 45% drop in its fourth-quarter net profit. Earnings for the January-March quarter fell to 105.68 crore, down from 190.34 crore last year. The sharp decline was fueled by a massive 95% surge in engineering and construction costs, alongside global supply chain disruptions and delayed customer payments. Despite the weak financial performance, company officials highligh ted that their order book remains strong at 3.1 gigawatts. However, market brokerages have already lowered future earni ngs estimates due to ongoing execution challenges.

Fire at supplier plant disrupts Hyundai production

CH NEWS, NEW DELHI Automobile giant Hyundai Motor India announced that a sudden fire at a major supplier's facility in Tamil Nadu will temporarily disrupt its vehicle production. The blaze broke out at the Mobis factory in Kancheepuram, which supplies audio components and auto parts to Hyundai. Fortunately, no casualties were reported. Both companies are currently assessing the structural damage and hunting for alternative suppliers to minimize delays. Hyundai assured buyers that dealerships hold sufficient vehicle inventory to meet current demands. This disruption hits just as Hyundai implements a planned price hike of up to 12,800 due to rising costs.

Samsung beats Micron to dominate automotive chips

SEOUL

Tech giant Samsung Electronics has officially dethroned US rival Micron Technology to become the world's top automotive memory chip supplier.

Driven by aggressive expansion, Samsung successfully captured a dominant 40 percent share of the global vehicle memory market, completely reshaping the automotive tech industry.

According to data, Samsung's market share jumped from 35 percent to 40 percent over the past year. Conversely, longtime industry leader Micron saw its dominant lead slip, falling from 40 percent down to 36 percent. The shift marks a historic turnaround, considering that older industry reports once placed Micron's market hold at over 50 percent, while Samsung trailed in the low teens.

The automotive sector is notoriously difficult to break into compared to smartphones or servers. Memory chips used in modern vehicles must meet exceptionally strict safety and reliability standards. Furthermore, automakers require incredibly long product cycles, demanding components that remain available for years of continuous vehicle production and maintenance.

While South Korean chipmakers traditionally focused on high-capacity memory for mobile devices, Samsung's recent pivot into automotive systems broadens its revenue base. This comes at a crucial time when the market remains heavily focused on high-bandwidth memory for artificial intelligence servers.

Samsung also maintained its crown as the overall leader in the broader DRAM market for the first quarter of 2026, holding a 38 percent market share. Thanks to the massive global AI data center boom, total DRAM revenue reached a staggering record of $97 billion during the quarter. However, Samsung's new crown in the automotive chip segment secures a highly stable, long-term growth engine.

Australia's Airtrunk invests in Maharashtra

MUMBAI

In a monumental boost to India's digital landscape, the Maharashtra government has officially teamed up with Australian tech giant AirTrunk for a massive two lakh crore rupee data center project.

The state government issued a formal Letter of Intent, securing a prime land allotment at the booming Raigad Pen Growth Centre. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced the historic deal following a high-level meeting with AirTrunk founder and Chief Executive Officer Robin Khuda. The ambitious project is planned to have a colossal three-gigawatt capacity, instantly making it one of the single largest digital infrastructure investments in the entire state's history.

Fadnavis highlighted that this mega-project will rapidly accelerate Maharashtra's technological development, firmly anchoring the region as South Asia's premier technology and data hub. The diplomatic importance of the project was further underscored by the presence of Australian Consul General Paul Murphy at the official meeting.

Automakers maintain powerful sales momentum in May

MUMBAI

Indian automakers Hyundai and Mahindra reported strong sales growth in May driven by robust utility vehicle demand, despite minor production bottlenecks and muted stock market reactions.

India's leading automobile manufacturers maintained a powerful sales momentum in May, with Hyundai Motor India and Mahindra & Mahindra reporting healthy growth driven by steady domestic demand.

Industry data released showed that consumer appetite for new vehicles, especially utility models, remains highly robust.

Hyundai Motor India recorded domestic sales of 47,837 units this May, marking a solid 9.1 percent year-on-year growth. When combined with their export of 13,300 units, Hyundai's total monthly sales reached 61,137 vehicles, representing a 4.1 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

Meanwhile, Mahindra & Mahindra enjoyed a massive 20 percent year-on-year surge, selling a total of 99,636 vehicles globally. In the domestic utility vehicle segment alone, Mahindra sold 58,021 vehicles, up 11 percent from last year. The company's domestic commercial vehicles also grew by 19 percent, while its total exports jumped an impressive 37 percent to 5,000 units.

Nalinikanth Gollagunta, CEO of Mahindra's Automotive Division, confirmed that demand across their vehicle portfolio remains strong. However, he noted that production faced minor bottlenecks due to manpower shortages at certain supplier factories.

Interestingly, despite the positive sales report, stock market reactions were muted. In early trade on the BSE, Hyundai shares dipped 1.48 percent to an intraday low of 1,900 rupees. Similarly, Mahindra & Mahindra's stock slipped 1.47 percent to 2,990 rupees. Nevertheless, the overall retail numbers prove that India's automotive sector is cruising ahead smoothly.

SoftBank dethrones Toyota as Japan's top firm

TOKYO

The global artificial intelligence boom reshaped Japan's corporate landscape, as SoftBank Group officially surpassed automotive titan Toyota to become the country's most valuable listed company.

Driven by immense market optimism, the Masayoshi Son-led investing giant watched its market capitalization rocket past 46 trillion yen (around 288 billion dollars).

SoftBank's shares have surged an incredible 80 percent this year. This dramatic rise reflects intense investor confidence in the group's heavy investments in artificial intelligence, including high-profile stakes in OpenAI and Arm Holdings. Rumors surrounding the potential public listings of major portfolio companies have added fuel to the fire. Conversely, Toyota faced a 10 percent stock decline this year, dragging its valuation below the 46 trillion yen milestone and ending its 22-year reign at the top of Japan Inc.

The historic shift highlights how global investors are aggressively rewarding technology and semiconductor platforms over traditional industries, even as global markets face geopolitical headwinds. Chip manufacturing giants like Samsung, Micron, and SK Hynix have also seen valuations balloon in recent months.

Capitalizing on this momentum, SoftBank's stock jumped another 10 percent following the announcement of a massive 75-billion-euro expansion plan. The company will invest this capital over five years to build high-capacity AI data centers and digital infrastructure in France. Chief Executive Masayoshi Son stated that building next-generation infrastructure is vital to shaping the future of global society, confidently positioning France as Europe's premier hub for the unfolding AI revolution.

Coal output drops amid record power demand

NEW DELHI

State-owned Coal India Limited (CIL) reported a worrying 11.6 percent year-on-year drop in coal production for May. Output slipped to 56.1 million tonnes, down from 63.5 million tonnes last year, right when the nation's electricity demand hit a historic all-time high.

While CIL did not officially explain the sudden slump, major subsidiaries like Mahanadi Coalfields and Bharat Coking Coal suffered significant losses. Only South Eastern Coalfields buc ked the trend, registering po sitive growth. Alarmingly, the overall April-May production also plummeted by 10.6 percent to 112.2 million tonnes. This drop arrives at a highly sensitive time. Driven by blistering summer heat waves, India's peak power demand shattered previous records to touch a massive 270.82 gigawatts on May 21.

Indian consumers face major wallet changes, including updated UPI transaction rules, new tax deadlines, and higher commercial LPG prices

Big financial changes take effect this June

NEW DELHI

Indian consumers and businesses face several major wallet changes, spanning from updated UPI transaction rules to higher commercial cooking gas prices.

First, high-value UPI payments will feature extra security layers, requiring authentication beyond just standard PINs.

Furthermore, cardless ATM withdrawals using UPI will now count toward a bank's monthly free transaction limit, meaning users could face extra fees if they exceed their cap. On a positive note, the EPFO is testing a system to allow qui ck provident fund withdrawals directly via UPI.

Tax and property rules have also been updated. The deadline for the first installment of advance tax for FY 2026-27 is June 15, requiring citizens with liabilities over 10,000 rupees to pay 15 percent to avoid inte rest. Meanwhile, PAN card rul es have eased, as it is no longer mandatory for certain cash deposits over 50,000 rupees. The threshold requiring PAN disclosure for buying or selling property has also increased, though strict reporting remains for high-value gift deeds. Fina lly, fuel prices are shifting. State-owned oil companies rais ed the price of a 19-kg com me rcial LPG cylinder in Delhi by 42 rupees, alongside hikes for 5-kg free-trade cylinders. Fortunately, domestic kitchen LPG cylinder prices remain un chan ged, keeping household budgets safe. Looking ahead, all eyes are on the Reserve Bank of India's upcoming monetary policy meeting scheduled between June 3 and June 5. Consumers will also need to track petrol and diesel costs closely as global oil market fluctuations continue to impact domestic fuel rates.

KIIFB CLEAN-UP BEGINS

V.D. Satheesan tightens grip on KIIFB

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In a major administrative shakeup, Kerala's newly elected UDF government is ready to restructure the state's main infrastructure financing body.

Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan has initiated a comprehensive overhaul of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB), signaling a strong push for transparency and financial discipline.

Though assuming office just two weeks ago, the Chief Minister has already chaired two high-level review meetings

regarding KIIFB's operations. Since Satheesan also holds the Finance portfolio, he will exercise direct command over the agency, effectively ending its years of autonomous functioning and weak government oversight. Founded in 1999, KIIFB has funded massive projects worth over 60,000 crore rupees across Kerala, covering roads, healthcare, and ports. However, its immense financial footprint has drawn sharp criticism over questionable spending, staffing patterns, and loose governance. Preliminary official reviews recently exposed widespread irregularities, including a heavy reliance on high-paying contract roles for a select, favored network.

To clean up the system, the administration will place KIIFB under the direct supervision of the Finance Department. The government plans to phase out temporary appointments, replacing them with qualified, serving government officers on official deputation. Furthermore, authorities are probing allegations that certain board employees are secretly running private consultancies.

This cleanup marks a decisive shift for the Satheesan admi nistration as it looks to redefine Kerala's development model. Highlighting the political intensity of the situation, long-time KIIFB CEO K.M. Abraham resigned from his post immediately after the Congress-led alliance secured its stunning election victory.

Black Box partners with AIONOS for AI

MUMBAI

Global digital infrastructure integrator Black Box and AI-native technology firm AIONOS announced a powerful strategic partnership.

The landmark alliance aims to help major businesses globally accelerate their artificial intelligence transformation, moving smoothly from initial system setup to measurable financial success.

The collaboration merges Black Box's deep expertise in heavy digital systems - spanning data centers, network connectivity, and managed operations across 35 countries with AIONOS's cutting-edge applied AI platforms. By combining their strengths, the firms

will enable modern companies to build, deploy, and manage advanced AI with tight security and data resilience embedded at every single layer.

Tech visionaries C.P. Gurnani and Sanjeev Verma will directly steer the alliance's international expansion across India, North America, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region. In India, a major priority will be supporting the country's booming Global Capability Centre (GCC) network. The partnership will help these hubs build AI-ready infrastructure and deploy highly secure systems that sync perfectly with their international parent companies.

Industry leaders emphasize that businesses no longer lack digital ambition; rather, they need practical partners to bring technology to life. This unified partnership offers exactly that, acting as a single accountable guide. Moving forward, the joi nt venture will focus heavily on data resilience, ensuring that en terprise systems can rapidly recover from cyber disruptions. By combining physical infrastru cture with high-level intelligence, the alliance promises to deliver real business outcomes, including optimized corporate costs, boosted worker productiv ity, substantial revenue growth.

RCB AVOIDS PARADE A YEAR AFTER STAMPEDE TRAGEDY

RCB title celebrations curtailed amid safety concerns and solemn remembrance

BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's successful defence of their IPL title will not be followed by a victory parade in Bengaluru, with the franchise and authorities opting for caution a year after the tragic stampede that claimed 11 lives during celebrations of the team's maiden championship.

While fans across Karnataka celebrated the achievement, there will be no official roadshow or public procession involving the team in Bengaluru.

The decision comes in the backdrop of the June 4, 2025 stampede near the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, where 11 supporters lost their lives after massive crowds gathered for a hastily organised victory parade following RCB's first IPL title. The tragedy triggered widespread outrage and led to scrutiny of crowd-management practices by authorities and sporting bodies.

This year, both the franchise and police have adopted a more cautious approach to avoid any repeat of the incident.

"It is highly unlikely that there will be any activities in Bengaluru. There are certain guidelines in place, and we need to stick to them," an RCB source indicated.

Adding to the logistical challenges is the swearing-in ceremony of Karnataka's newly appointed Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, scheduled to take place at Lok Bhavan. The event is expected to attract large crowds and requires extensive security arrangements, limiting the availability of police personnel for any additional high-profile gathering.

The Governor's residence and the Chinnaswamy Stadium are located in close proximity, further complicating traffic and security management in the city centre.

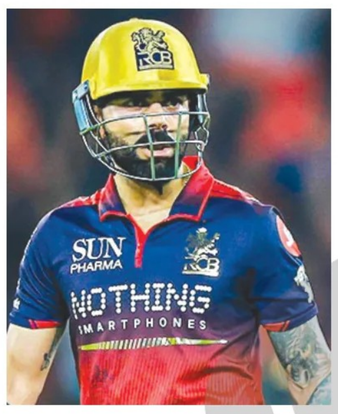
Bengaluru City Police had already issued an advisory urging supporters not to engage in road celebrations, burst firecrackers or create disturbances if RCB won the title.

"We will not allow any public celebrations. If anyone wants to celebrate, they can do it indoors," Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh had said ahead of the final.

The absence of a parade also reflects the team's desire to honour the memory of the supporters who lost their lives last year. During the IPL season, RCB paid tribute by leaving 11 seats permanently vacant at the Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Kohli's IPL final masterclass proves technique, temperament still matter: Coach

NEW DELHI



Virat's unbeaten final knock highlights value of skill over power-hitting

Virat Kohli's childhood coach Rajkumar Sharma has hailed the batting maestro's match-winning performance in the IPL 2026 final, saying the innings reaffirmed that technique and temperament remain the foundations of success in T20 cricket despite the format's growing obsession with power-hitting.

Kohli once again delivered on the biggest stage, guiding Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to a successful defence of their IPL title with a composed unbeaten 75 off 42 balls against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad on Sunday. His innings, studded with nine boundaries and three sixes, helped RCB chase down a target of 156 with five wickets in hand and two overs to spare.

Praising his former ward's knock as "excellent" and "brilliant", Sharma said Kohli's approach offered a valuable lesson for aspiring cricketers who often equate T20 success solely with aggressive strokeplay.

"That is a lesson for the youngsters to understand that it is not about power-hitting only, not about hitting sixes only. If you are good with the technique, you can always score big and that is what Virat showed today also," Sharma told media Videos.

He said Kohli's ability to combine technical excellence with mental strength has been the cornerstone of his success over the years, both for India and in franchise cricket.

"If you have good technique and good temperament, you can succeed consistently. Virat has won countless matches for India and his franchises with this style of batting. He is an example for youngsters to learn how T20 cricket should be played," Sharma said.

The IPL triumph capped another remarkable season for Kohli, who crossed the 600-run mark for the fourth consecutive year despite playing limited T20 cricket outside the league.

Sharma attributed the veteran batter's longevity and consistency to his relentless desire to win matches and his commitment to putting the team above personal milestones.

Looking ahead to India's ODI series against Afghanistan later this month, Sharma said Kohli continues to inspire cricketers and sports enthusiasts alike through his professionalism and fitness standards.

"He has set an example with his discipline, intensity and fitness. Virat continues to inspire not only cricketers but the entire country through the standards he maintains," Sharma added.

RCB dominated IPL 2026, now aiming for title hat-trick: Patidar

AHMEDABAD

Royal Challengers Bengaluru captain Rajat Patidar said winning a second consecutive IPL title on his 33rd birthday was special, but insisted the greater satisfaction came from the manner in which his team dominated the tournament from start to finish.

RCB sealed their second IPL crown with a five-wicket victory over Gujarat Titans, capping a campaign in which they consistently outperformed opponents and established themselves as the competition's benchmark side.

Reflecting on the triumph, Patidar said this season felt very different from last year's title-winning run, when pressure and expectations weighed heavily on the squad.

"To be honest, last year was a lot of pressure. This year was calmer because of the way we played throughout the tournament. I think we have not just played, we dominated this year," Patidar said.

The skipper noted that RCB's commanding performances throughout the season gave the team confidence that another title was within reach.

"We were pretty much confident that if we kept playing like this, we were definitely going to win the second title for RCB," he added.

Patidar also issued a warning to rival teams, making it clear that RCB's ambitions extend beyond back-to-back championships.

"It is the best birthday gift. It feels great overall, but I always try to stay in the present. We have to focus on how we can do three in a row," he said.

The Madhya Pradesh batter played a crucial role in RCB's success, not only as captain but also with the bat. He scored 501 runs during the season at an impressive strike rate of 192.69, reflecting significant improvement in his batting.

Patidar credited extensive preparation and guidance from mentor Dinesh Karthik for helping him refine his game.

"I communicated a lot with DK bhai regarding technical changes and trigger movements. That gave me clarity and helped me execute better as a batsman," he explained.

The captain reserved special praise for Virat Kohli, who anchored RCB's successful chase in the final with an unbeaten 75 and finished the season with 675 runs. "I don't have words to explain him. We learn from him every day, on and off the field. His energy in practice is exactly the same as in a match, and that is something I always admire," Patidar said.

Patidar dedicates title to stampede victims

Royal Challengers Bengaluru captain Rajat Patidar dedicated the franchise's second consecutive IPL title to the 11 fans who lost their lives in the Chinnaswamy Stadium stampede during celebrations following RCB's maiden title triumph in 2025. Patidar said the tragedy remained deeply painful for the team. "You lost your fans after winning the game. Not the fans, they are family members. I always want this trophy to be dedicated to them," he said. RCB had earlier honoured the victims by leaving 11 seats empty at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium during the season opener.

Sooryavanshi a rare talent, let his natural instincts flourish: Tendulkar

Batting legend urges patience and freedom for teenage cricket sensation

MUMBAI

Batting great Sachin Tendulkar has described teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi as a "truly special" talent and cautioned coaches and mentors against interfering with the youngster's natural game as he continues his rapid rise in Indian cricket.

The 15-year-old from Bihar has emerged as one of the brightest prospects in world cricket after a sensational IPL 2026 season, where he amassed 776 runs at an astonishing strike rate of 237.31. His fearless batting against elite bowlers such as Jasprit Bumrah, Kagiso Rabada and Pat Cummins earned widespread praise from fans and experts alike.

Tendulkar said Sooryavanshi's batting stood out not only because of his power but also because of his technical qualities.

"Everyone is talking about Sooryavanshi, and I watched him bat. It was magnificent. He is something truly special," Tendulkar said.

"What fascinated me was the wrist work that he has. To be able to play in all directions of the ground, you need good wrist work. He is not slogging the ball. He is picking the line and length earlier than others and clearing the ropes comfortably."

Tendulkar believes the teenager possesses the talent required to eventually represent India in Test cricket, but stressed that expectations should be managed carefully.

"I would tell him to just be himself. There is always a first time. Along with age, he will learn how to deal with various challenges. It's about having a solution-oriented mindset," he said.

The cricket icon emphasised that every batter faces constant challenges and that learning to adapt is a gradual process.

"He looks very confident and very sure of what he wants to do. I would not want to play around with his natural instincts," Tendulkar added.

According to the former India captain, preserving that instinctive approach is crucial for the youngster's long-term development.

Gaikwad replaces injured Parag in India A squad for Sri Lanka series

NEW DELHI

India batter and Chennai Super Kings captain Ruturaj Gaikwad has been drafted into the India A squad for the upcoming tri-nation series in Sri Lanka, replacing Rajasthan Royals skipper Riyan Parag, who has been ruled out with a hamstring injury.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced the change, confirming that Parag will miss the tournament and undergo rehabilitation under the supervision of the BCCI Centre of Excellence.

"The Men's Selection Committee has added Ruturaj Gaikwad to the India A squad for the upcoming tri-series in Sri Lanka. He replaces vice-captain Riyan Parag, who has been ruled out of the series due to a hamstring injury," the BCCI said in a statement.

Parag reportedly played much of the IPL 2026 season while managing the injury and is expected to remain sidelined for nearly three months, including recovery and rehabilitation. His absence is a significant setback for India A, as he had been named vice-captain of the squad.

Gaikwad's inclusion provides experience and stability to the batting unit. The 29-year-old has been a consistent performer in domestic and franchise cricket and now gets an opportunity to strengthen his case for higher honours through the developmental tour.

The tri-series, featuring India A, Sri Lanka A and Afghanistan A, is scheduled to begin on June 9 in Sri Lanka. The tournament is expected to serve as an important platform for emerging players seeking to impress selectors ahead of future international assignments.

The squad will be led by Tilak Varma, while Gaikwad takes over as vice-captain following Parag's withdrawal. The batting group also includes exciting young talents such as Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Priyansh Arya and Ayush Badoni.

The updated India A squad comprises: Tilak Varma (captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad (vice-captain), Priyansh Arya, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Ayush Badoni, Nishant Sindhu, Suryansh Shedge, Prabhsimran Singh (wicketkeeper), Kumar Kushagra (wicketkeeper), Vipraj Nigam, Yash Thakur, Yudhvir Singh, Anshul Kamboj, Arshad Khan and Anukul Roy.

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